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A PLACE IN THE SUN

CYRIL HARCOURT

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A PLACE IN THE SUN

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY CYRIL HARCOURT

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Produced at The Comedy Theatre, November 3rd, 1913.

CHARACTERS

(ORIGINAL CAST).

DICK BLAIR (<i>A Novelist</i>)...	...	Mr. ROBERT LORAINÉ
SIR JOHN CAPEL, Bart. ...	...	Mr. LYSTON LYLE
STUART CAPEL (<i>His Son</i>)...	...	Mr. REGINALD OWEN
ARTHUR BLAGDEN...	...	Mr. CYRIL HARCOURT
PARSONS (<i>A Butler</i>) ...	...	Mr. WALTERS
MARJORIE CAPEL ...	...	Miss JEAN CAVENDISH
Mrs. MOUTRIE ...	...	Miss VANE FEATHERSTON
ROSE BLAIR ...	...	Miss ELLEN O'MALLEY
AGNES (<i>A Maid</i>) ...	...	Miss IVY WILLIAMS

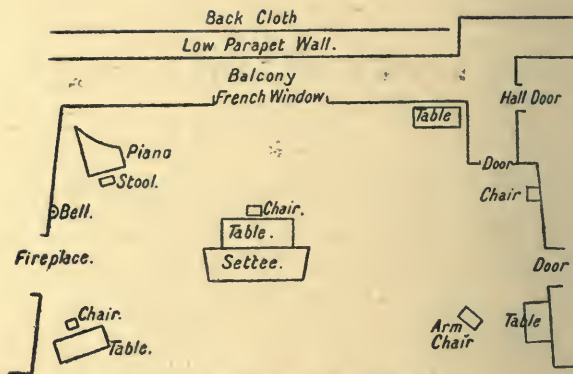
PERIOD:—*Present Day. London.*

ACT I.—*Dick Blair's Flat.*

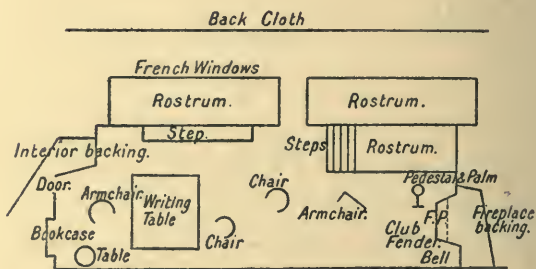
ACT II.—*Sir John Capel's House.*

ACT III.—*Same as Act I.*

N.B.—*Application should be made to the Publisher for right of*
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SCENE PLAN. ACTS I AND III.



SCENE PLAN. ACT II.

A PLACE IN THE SUN.

ACT I.

SCENE: *Dick Blair's flat in London. French windows open—doors all closed.*

TIME: *Summer. Afternoon.*

(*ROSE is discovered R. of C. table, taking off her hat. She is a pretty young girl, quietly dressed. AGNES crosses from up L. to up R. outside windows carrying tea-tray; as she passes windows ROSE speaks.*)

ROSE. Agnes. (*AGNES puts tray down off R. and comes to L. of ROSE.*) Have you any idea where my brother is? He went out after lunch, didn't he?

AGNES. Yes, Miss—— (*Door slam off L.*) I think I hear Mr. Dick now, Miss. (*Goes to R. of door up L.C.*)

Enter DICK. He is a youngish man, who has found his feet; he is well and quietly dressed in the manner of an educated gentleman. He carries some letters.

ROSE. Well, Dick?

[*Exit AGNES up L.C.*

DICK (*comes down L. of ROSE, puts his hat on table L. of window*). Hullo! back again then? Have you had a good walk? How's the Park looking? Lovely, I suppose. (*Opens letters at table C.*)

ROSE. Yes, but it's only a Park, Dick, and I want—I want the country. I miss the farm in weather like this.

DICK (*laughing*). The farm? Do you really? After—how many years is it? Nearly five years since my little sister came to keep house for me, isn't it?

ROSE. Ah, there's far more of the rustic in me than in you.

DICK. Rather! I admit that I'm a thorough cockney now. I've almost forgotten that I ever milked a cow.

ROSE. People frighten ME, Dick, far more than cows ever did.

DICK. People? Why? What sort of people? You've never said that before.

ROSE. Clever people—our set.

DICK (*laughingly*). Oh!

ROSE. Yes, they do. People who turn a chair into an epigram— (DICK *laughs*.) And all that sort of thing.

DICK. This is quite a new mood. (*Takes her left arm, bringing her down L. to C. in front of settee.*) What is making you dissatisfied, little girl?

ROSE. Oh, everything. I'm—I'm only a fool.

DICK. Bosh! (*Kisses her.*) You're a darling. (*They sit on settee.*)

ROSE. It's all very well for you. People think everything you say is clever, because you're successful. (*Looks at him.*)

DICK. Well, there's something in that. (*Rises, to R. Slight pause. He picks up a book from table down R.*) Rosie?

ROSE. Yes.

DICK. You're happy with me, aren't you?

ROSE. Happy? Yes, I suppose so.

DICK. After all, it is your natural place, isn't it, until you marry?

ROSE (*surprised*). Marry? (*Rises and looks away from him.*)

DICK (*going to her*). Well, you will marry some day, I suppose. This sort of thing, this brother and sister arrangement, can't go on for ever, can it? I might want to marry somebody else's sister some day. You never know. It might happen to me any day in the week. Then where would you be?—with no nice big brother to look after you and smack you when you're naughty. (*Sits on R. arm of settee, C.*) I know of two or three men who'd be glad to marry *you*, Rosie. Has it ever struck you that Arthur Blagden is inclined to be devotional?

ROSE (*turns to him*). Mr. Blagden! But he drinks.

DICK. Oh, I don't say that I'd pick him out for you.

His name occurred to me, that's all. He's a clever chap though.

ROSE. I daresay he is. (*Crossing to chair down L. and standing behind it.*) (*Saying, with a change of tone.*) Dick, do you remember the Capels?

DICK. The Capels? Do you mean those people who lived up at the Hall at home?

ROSE. Yes.

DICK (*seated on settee arm*). Yes, I remember them. Why?

ROSE (*trying to appear disinterested*). I met him again, that's all.

DICK. Him?

ROSE. Stuart—the son!

DICK (*lightly*). Oh! When did you meet him?

ROSE. Oh, a few weeks ago.

DICK. Why didn't you tell me?

ROSE. I don't know. I suppose I forgot.

DICK. So young Capel's in town, is he? *What* is he?

ROSE. (*Sits on arm of chair down L.*) A barrister, I think he said. They've left the Hall, you know. I wrote and told you years ago, don't you remember? He lives in the Temple now.

DICK. He seems to have been very confidential.

ROSE. You used to think he was so conceited when we were children.

DICK (*rises and goes up R. to table C. where he handles one or two of his letters.*) He didn't quite understand then that a man isn't necessarily a bounder because he can make a ditch, or because he went to a Board School instead of Harrow.

ROSE. Well, he isn't like that now in the least.

DICK (*coming down R. and round to L.C.*) Did you tell him you lived with me?

ROSE. Yes. He knew all about *you*, of course—he'd read your books.

DICK. Poor devil! Well, if he wants to know you, I suppose he'll get his sister to call. (*Goes up L., and to back of desk C.*)

ROSE. But do you think she would call on *us*?

DICK. Why not?

ROSE. Well—why?

DICK (*sitting at desk c*). Then, of course, he can't know *you*. Miss Capel isn't a snob; besides people don't observe these ridiculous class distinctions of yours nowadays. Belted Earls marry where they like. Do you think Capel expects you to walk about the streets with him like a servant girl with a soldier? He'd better *not* think so. (*Bell.*)

ROSE. I didn't know you disliked him so.

DICK (*laughing*). Dislike him? My dear child, I don't know him.

ROSE (*rises*). I'm sure his sister *won't* call here, all the same.

DICK. Well then, that will be an end of the matter.

Enter AGNES, L.C.

AGNES. Mrs. Moutrie.

(*DICK groans comically and rises.*)

Enter MRS. MOUTRIE quickly, out of breath. She is a plump lady with a kindly, vivacious, humorous manner—smart, worldly and genuine. She shows a most motherly regard for DICK, who chaffs and bullies her affectionately. ROSE moves up L.

DICK (*taking a step towards her*). Hullo! what are you doing here?

MRS. M. (*to DICK*). Oh, my dear, why don't you have an elevator? I wouldn't climb these stairs for anyone in London but you, Dick.

DICK. Quite right! No one else would be worth it. (*They kiss.*)

MRS. M. Ah! now that's conceited, dear. They call that swanking. (*DICK laughs, and moves back to his desk. MRS. MOUTRIE comes to ROSE.*) Rosie, I'm afraid you spoil him. How are you, dear?

ROSE. You began to spoil him long before I did.

(*DICK glances at his letters.*)

MRS. M. Well, perhaps I did. Did the creature ever tell you why I first took to him?

ROSE. No, never. (*They come down L. together.*)

MRS. M. He laughed at my poetry.

ROSE. I didn't know you had written any.

DICK (*going down R*). She hasn't!

MRS. M. Dick, I still maintain——

DICK (*coming to R. end of settee*). Yes, I know you do, but don't—don't! You can't live up to it.

MRS. M. (*admiringly to ROSE*). Isn't he rude? (*Sits c. settee*.) I don't really think in my inmost soul that I've got quite the figure for poetry.

DICK. Now, look here, you're not to get launched in a conversation. (*ROSE sits down L.*) You've not explained yet why you dare to be here. You know very well I'm working.

MRS. M. (*plaintively*). But you haven't heard yet why I've come, dear.

DICK (*impatiently*). Well then—tell me.

MRS. M. You do hurry me so. Rosie, do you allow him to?

DICK. Never mind, Rosie—what do you want to tell me?

MRS. M. Oh! you do exasperate me, Dick!

DICK (*takes out his watch*). You have got just one minute in which to arrive at the point.

MRS. M. (*leaning back*). I've a very good mind not to tell you at all.

DICK. Five seconds.

MRS. M. Does he treat you like this, Rosie? (*Turns to her*.)

DICK. Ten seconds. (*ROSE smiles*.)

MRS. M. (*turning to him*). Dick, do you think I climb four flights of . . . Dick! Dick! I'm speaking to you.

DICK. Thirty seconds.

MRS. M. Did you hear what I said?

DICK. Yes—hearing perfect.

MRS. M. I can't say as much for your manners.

DICK (*puts his watch in his pocket—takes a step towards her and holds out his hand*). Good-bye.

MRS. M. I won't move!

DICK. Oh, very well then. (*He goes in front of settee towards the door at back L.*)

MRS. M. (*turning to him quickly*). Dick, what are you going to do?

DICK (*at door*). I'm going to fetch a policeman.

MRS. M. Come here! come here, and I—I'll tell you.

DICK. I'm not going to stand any more nonsense. If you try to be kittenish——

MRS. M. Come here—and I'll tell you.

DICK (*he goes slowly to L. of her, frowning horribly*)
Well?

MRS. M. (*hesitating and looking anxiously at him*).
I've—I've found you—a wife.

DICK (*stepping backwards*). What!!!

MRS. M. I've found you—a wife!

DICK (*comes to R. of her and seizes hold of her*). Out you go! Open the door, Rosie!

MRS. M. (*struggling*). No, Dick!

DICK (*stepping away to R.*). You—awful woman
You—vampire!

MRS. M. (*turning to him quickly*). She isn't good enough for you, I admit. But if I didn't try to get people married *sometimes* I think I should go mad.

DICK. Yes, I believe you would. I will *not* be hawked about in this unblushing way. You make me go pink all down my spine. (*He moves to table down R. and picks up a book.*)

MRS. M. She's got heaps of money, Dick.

DICK. Thanks. So have I. Quite enough.

MRS. M. And she simply worships your books.

DICK. My books! (*Flaring up again—bangs book on table.*) That absolutely settles it. How dare you! You preposterous, match-making female! (*Comes to R. of her again.*)

MRS. M. (*distressed*). Oh, but she doesn't gush, Dick. Really, she doesn't gush. She's not frothy—she isn't a bit frothy.

DICK (*growling*). She's got a soul! (*Goes up R. to behind table c.*) You're a wicked woman. (*Picks up some papers—goes up to door again.*)

MRS. M. (*firmly*). I am convinced—she could make a rice pudding.

DICK (*arrested, puts papers down*). Could she? (*Comes down to L. of her again.*) Do you mean a really good one?

MRS. M. Yes, I do.

DICK. With the rice all fat and crumbly?

MRS. M. Yes. And I don't think she goes to church—much. You know you'll like that.

DICK (*growling*). There's *something* wrong with her.

She's some wretched little flapper, I know 'em. Or she's a ferocious, hammering militant suffragette—or she's got a birthmark.

MRS. M. (*turns to him quickly*). She has *not* got a birthmark—anywhere. (*DICK looks at ROSE, who laughs.*) I've seen her myself when she's been—— (*DICK moves down L. laughing.*) Well, when she's—she's the very girl, Dick. You'll think so when you see her.

DICK. But I'm not *going* to see her. (*To L. of her again.*)

MRS. M. You *are*! You're going to see her this very afternoon. I told her to call here and pick me up. *She* was willing enough, it's Barkis who's the trouble. Now look here, Dick, someone must be sacrificed for the good of the State. Walk down Kensington High Street of an afternoon, and what do you see? Superfluous women in heaps, buying hats. Very well, it's the mission of people like me to get them off somehow, marry them—respectably, if possible. You're just the man.

DICK. I'm going out. Do you hear? (*Goes up to door.*) I'm going out. (*Deliberately.*) I'm going to meet a man, at the Club, about a dog. (*He opens door, and slams it.* MRS. MOUTRIE shows great disappointment, and turns and finds DICK still there. *They both laugh, ROSE also. Comes down to her again.*) Who is she?

MRS. M. She's Sir John Capel's daughter.

ROSE. Dick! (*Rises.*)

DICK. Oh, then I happen to know the lady.

MRS. M. You've met her? The little monkey! Why didn't she tell me? Why did she want to pull my leg?

DICK. She wasn't pulling your leg. She doesn't *really* know me. They used to live down our way, that's all—Lord of the Manor and so forth. Rosie and I lived on a farm. Rosie and I are bucolic. (*Crossing to R.*)

ROSE. Stuart must have asked her to call, Dick. (*Bell.*)

MRS. M. Stuart, the brother?

DICK. Yes. (*Takes up another book from table down L.*)

MRS. M. No. She's coming at my suggestion.

Enter AGNES.

AGNES. Mr. Blagden.

Enter BLAGDEN. *He is a somewhat sinister young man, with an abrupt, direct, rude manner. He comes down L.C.*

BLAGDEN. How do you do, Miss Blair? I was afraid you wouldn't be at home.

ROSE. How do you do?

DICK. Hullo, Blagden. How are you? Here, be introduced. Mr. Blagden—Mrs. Moutrie. (*Indicates her.*) Well, how goes it?

BLAGDEN. Oh, moderate. I haven't seen you about lately.

DICK. No. I've been rather sticking to it.

BLAGDEN (*glancing first at ROSE and then at DICK*). Have you got a moment now?

DICK. Yes. Here (*moves to MRS. M.*), out you go—you two! Take the air. Come along! No nonsense! (*Takes her up R.*) Gentleman's come to borrow half a crown. (*ROSE goes up L. to windows.*)

MRS. M. (*at windows*). Well, really, your manners, my dear. (*Turns to him.*)

DICK (*R. of her*). Beautiful manners—what's the matter with them?

MRS. M. (*going on to balcony*). Rosie, what a sky! It's just the colour of my new frock. (*Exit ROSE and MRS. MOUTRIE on to the balcony to R.*)

DICK (*crosses at back to L. and round to C. to BLAGDEN*). Well, what's the matter?

BLAGDEN (*bluntly*). I want to propose to your sister.

DICK (*laughs*). Well, you're rather an unexpected sort of chap.

BLAGDEN. Have you any objection? (*Pause.*) (*DICK hesitates.*) Please be frank.

DICK. My sister will marry whom she chooses, only—

BLAGDEN. Only the prospect of myself is a little terrifying.

DICK. You know why?

BLAGDEN. I can guess. (*He gives a short hard laugh.*)

DICK. I should at least feel bound to insist on your giving me your word, your absolute *promise*—

BLAGDEN. Whisky?

DICK. Yes.

BLAGDEN. Well, I'll promise, swear it if you like; and I could chuck it for *her*, Blair.

DICK. Well, if you couldn't—God help you.

BLAGDEN. A decent woman could make what she liked of ME. D'you know that?

DICK. She *is* a decent woman.

BLAGDEN. Then why do you let her go about with rotten men? (DICK *looks at him enquiringly*.) Oh, I'm a vindictive beer-swilling beast myself, I know, but I'm pretty honest about it.

DICK. Who *else* are you talking about?

BLAGDEN. A little barrister pup named Capel. I met them out together the other day.

DICK. Oh! And what do you know about *him*?

BLAGDEN. I was up at Oxford with him.

DICK. Well?

BLAGDEN. I was an Exhibitioner, and he was a blood. I had to do it on a hundred and twenty—*had* to—he *didn't*. You can supply the context. Blair—he—Well, I suppose only a poor man at an expensive college knows what humiliation can be.

DICK. Wouldn't sarcasm have killed him?

BLAGDEN (*looking away from DICK*). I hadn't come to my full bitterness of tongue.

DICK (*touched*). Poor beggar! Go ahead then; try your luck. (BLAGDEN *looks at him*) *under* that promise. (Crosses to L.) (BLAGDEN *crosses to R.*)

Enter ROSE from balcony, followed by MRS. MOUTRIE.

DICK *goes L.*

ROSE. Dick, Miss Capel is just coming. (*Comes to chair behind table c.*)

MRS. M. (*coming to R. of table c.*) Yes, she's in the offing. Your number's up. And I want my tea, Dick.

DICK. All right, all right—don't worry, woman. (*He speaks to ROSE for a moment, and then exits to R.*)

MRS. M. (*comes down to L.C.*). I hope Mr. Blagden isn't afraid of women, because there'll be three of us here in a minute.

(ROSE *picks up her hat from table c. and puts it on table L. of window.*)

BLAGDEN. I've been told women are afraid of me.

MRS. M. Really? Now why?

BLAGDEN. Well, I'm honest.

MRS. M. Oh! and what else are you?

BLAGDEN. I'm a drunkard.

MRS. M. How interesting! I've never met one before.
(Bell.) And what do you do when you aren't——

BLAGDEN. When I'm sober?

MRS. M. Yes.

BLAGDEN. I waste my time with an ink-pot.

MRS. M. Oh, then *you're* a literary person too?

BLAGDEN. I don't quite see your grounds for assuming it. (Turns away and leans on mantel.)

AGNES enters.

AGNES. Miss Capel.

(ROSE moves to L. of C. table. MARJORIE enters. She is a pretty charming girl.)

MRS. M. (turning). Ah, here she is at last! (Sits C. settee.)

DICK re-enters and comes down R.

MARJ. (shaking hands). How do you do? It is Miss Blair, I suppose—I *am* so glad to meet you again.

ROSE (shyly). How do you do?

MRS. M. I hear you all know each other. You little wretch, why didn't you tell me?

MARJ. (laughing). Dear Mrs. Moutrie, I'm naturally secretive. (To ROSE.) I don't think I should have known *you*.

ROSE. It's a long time since we met.

MARJ. Yes, it makes one feel old.

MRS. M. (turning and seeing DICK). Marjorie, you're ignoring Mr. Blair—and he *is* so nice.

MARJ. (laughing). Is he?

DICK (crossing in front of settee to R. of MARJORIE). I'm afraid Miss Capel has forgotten me.

MARJ. Well, you'll admit you've changed.

(AGNES crosses from up L. to up R. carrying teapot and tea cake on tray. ROSE speaks to her for a moment.)

DICK. If I remember, it isn't like you to form opinions from the outsides of things.

MARJ. Ah! I was very young then.

DICK. In any case I don't think we ought to quarrel quite as soon as this. (Turns to ROSE.) Here, Rose, take "this woman" away and feed her. Give her some tea while I re-introduce myself to Miss Capel.

MRS. M. (rises and goes up R.) Tea? I'd sell my soul for it.

ROSE. (*up L.C.*) We will have it outside on the balcony.

MRS. M. (*at windows.*) I wonder if there'll be tea in heaven. I shall have SUCH a row with St. Peter if there isn't!

[*Exit MRS. MOUTRIE, followed by ROSE to R.*

(*As they exit DICK crosses to R. and up to back of his table C. MARJORIE drops down L.C.*)

DICK. Oh, let me introduce Mr. Blagden—Miss Capel. Mr. Blagden was at Oxford with your brother.

MARJ. Oh, are you the Mr. Blagden who—

BLAGDEN (*shortly*). Yes, I am.

MARJ. I didn't know you were a friend of my brother's.

BLAGDEN. I'm not. [*Exit BLAGDEN to balcony to R.*

DICK (*annoyed*). Blagden!

MARJ. What a very rude person!

DICK (*comes down R. to C. of settee*). I believe he and your brother had some sort of row—I'm sorry I gave you the wrong topic.

MARJ. He writes, doesn't he?

DICK. Yes—he's rather good. Haven't you read his things?

MARJ. No. Never mind *him*! So—we meet again—and you *are* a success, after all. I always said you would be, do you remember?

DICK. I've not forgotten the first person who was kind to me. I've blessed her memory many times.

MARJ. But you let me remain a memory.

DICK. Yes.

MARJ. (*down L.C.*). Why?

DICK. Pride.

MARJ. Pride—between friends?

DICK. Friends is a tall order; but I knew we *should* meet again. I had a feeling in my bones.

MARJ. Then I think you ought to make up for lost time now and tell me the whole story, don't you?

DICK. But it's such a long story.

MARJ. Then make a long story short.

(*They sit—DICK on L. arm of settee, MARJORIE down L.*)

DICK. Well, let's sit down. Once upon a time there was a beautiful princess who was good and kind to the beggars at her gate, as all nice princesses are; and among

the beggars there was one who took the bread of kindness with rather more than ordinary gratitude—and he went on his way.

MARJ. (*smiling*). Well?

DICK. Well, that night this particular beggar developed an extraordinary interest in the stars. As they were all tumbling round his head he could scarcely help it. Do you know those stars actually sang? And it was all about hope—and work—and waiting. That is the song of the stars, you know. You wouldn't believe the songs they sing to the people who take the trouble to listen. They're the wildest, maddest, most impossible songs; that's why half the world won't listen. Why, they've even been known to promise princesses to beggars. Think of that!

MARJ. And do the beggars listen?

DICK. One poor beggar did.

MARJ. Well?

DICK. Well—then he worked and waited as a wise and prudent beggar should; and all the time he was developing his ear for pretty words, and trying not to mix his metaphors, and to acquire good grammar. You see *bad* grammar meant a continuance of rags, and he was getting keener and keener about purple and fine linen, until——

MARJ. Until——

DICK. Until at last he found himself with a very fair rig-out considering his beginnings. Then one day he ran slap into that princess again——

MARJ. Well?

DICK. And then I'm afraid he rather lost his head. *He* began to sing and dance about—there was simply no stopping him. Why he—well, just listen to him.

MARJ. And the princess?

Enter Mrs. MOUTRIE from balcony.

DICK. The princess—why she——

MRS. M. Don't you two people want any tea?

DICK (*aside, and rising*). Oh, damn the woman (*Crosses down R.*)

MRS. M. (*comes down L. to MARJORIE*). Marjorie, I didn't suggest that you should *monopolise* Mr. Blair.

DICK. I was telling her a story.

MRS. M. Well, I don't know that a man who WRITES stories should be allowed to *tell* them too. I think it's asking a little too much of human nature.

DICK (to MARJORIE). Is it?

MARJ. (*rising, smiling*). I think I won't commit myself.

MRS. M. (to MARJORIE). You must go and talk to Rosie, and have your tea.

MARJ. (*going up L.*). Yes, I really must.

MRS. M. (*rapturously*). She's got some tea cake on that balcony——

MARJ. (*going to window, laughing*). I'll go. (*Turning.*) Mr. Blair?

DICK. Yes?

MARJ. I think your story was——

DICK (*eagerly*). Yes?

MARJ. Sweet! [*Exit MARJORIE C. to R.*]

MRS. M. (*goes to C.*). What story?

DICK (*coming to R. of her*). The one I was telling *her*. And it's no concern of *yours*!

MRS. M. Dick, will you marry her?

DICK. Are you deliberately inviting death?

MRS. M. Don't be ridiculous! Will you marry her?

DICK. How *can* I marry her if you come bouncing into the room just when I'm on the point of asking her?

MRS. M. (*starting*). What! Oh, I'm a plain fool!

DICK. You are!

MRS. M. (*triumphantly*). But I *knew* you could get her if you tried. I knew!

DICK (*distastefully*). Get her! (*Makes a wry face.*)

MRS. M. Well—win her.

DICK (*deliberately*). You have a gift, a genius—for the most inartistic—underbred and sticky phraseology—you ooze pomatum—and I can't get her, or win her—or marry her.

MRS. M. Why not?

DICK. Because she possesses a poisonous papa. I'm a rustic, and he won't forget it. So don't allow visions to obsess your democratic mind.

MRS. M. Don't you be a coward, my dear. She's the very girl, Dick—*facile princeps*.

DICK. Look here, I can stick your English—just.

But if you express yourself in Latin, I shall break things.

MRS. M. Then I'll give you a piece of advice in plain English—in *very* plain English.

DICK. Well?

MRS. M. Cock your eye at the daughter, my dear—and let the father rip.

DICK (*pause*). Ah. (*Nods his head.*) I think you were quite right to give up poetry.

Re-enter BLAGDEN.

BLAGDEN. Look here, I can't stand this.

DICK. What's up? (*Crosses to R.*)

BLAGDEN. Too many people. (*Moves over to piano.*)

DICK *laughs.*)

MRS. M. Well, that's civil. (*Moves to L.*)

DICK. They'll melt away, my dear chap. (*Moves over to c.*) Mrs. Moutrie's going now. I'm on the point of chucking her out.

(*MRS. MOUTRIE sits in chair L., firmly.*)

Enter MARJORIE, followed by ROSE. *They are both laughing and talking.*

MARJ. (*coming down to R. of MRS. M., ROSE stands L. of c. table*). Mrs. Moutrie, you ought to have told me. I'm exceedingly annoyed with you.

MRS. M. Now what have I done?

MARJ. (*to* DICK). Your sister says you always work in the afternoon, and here we are interrupting you and wasting your time. It's tragic!

DICK. Oh! but I always take a holiday once every seven years, I do, really.

MARJ. Mrs. Moutrie is an impossible person.

DICK. She is! I quite agree with you. Just look at her, sitting there as if she—as if she were one of us.

MRS. M. My dears, I did it with the best intentions.

MARJ. We must both go. (*Turns to* DICK.)

DICK (*going between her and ROSE to door L.C.*). Oh, please!

MARJ. No, I'm firm. Your sister says you told Mrs. Moutrie you were busy.

DICK (*R. of* MARJORIE). Yes, but Mrs. Moutrie's *always* bothering me. You're *not*.

MRS. M. Yes, I'm a *permanent* nuisance.

DICK. Exactly! She quite understands her position in space.

MARJ. (*to ROSE*). You must let me come again some other time.

DICK (*taking a step to her level*). Oh, if you'll promise to come again——

MARJ. (*to ROSE*). And you must come and see me. You won't forget, will you?

ROSE. No.

MARJ. (*offers her hand*). Good-bye, Mr. Blair.

DICK (*taking it*). I'll see you out, if you *will* go.

MARJ. Oh, but your work——

DICK. Work must wait. (*DICK follows MARJORIE out.*)

MRS. M. (*rising*). How people do hustle one! (*Goes up to ROSE. ROSE is L. of C. table.*) Good-bye, Rosie; you're looking pale. (*Kisses her.*)

ROSE. Am I? It's only London.

MRS. M. I think you ought to take iron.

(*ROSE comes down L. to C. of settee—BLAGDEN comes to above C. table.*)

Good-bye, Mr. Blagden. (*Shakes hands.*) Don't destroy my reputation in your papers, will you? I shouldn't like to lose it after having preserved it for so long. Wait for me, Dick! (*DICK is heard off.*) I want a taxi. Then I'm going to Stagg & Mantle's to buy some red flannel—(*Goes off up L.*). (*ROSE moves to R. end of settee. BLAGDEN closes door and looks at ROSE.*)

BLAGDEN. You're tired.

ROSE (*listlessly*). Yes. (*Sits on R. end of settee.*)

BLAGDEN. Shall I go?

ROSE. Not if you want to stay.

BLAGDEN. I want you—to marry me.

ROSE (*starting up in great distress, rises to R.*) Oh! I—I can't! I can't!

BLAGDEN. Can't you?

ROSE (*in a choked voice*). No! no!

BLAGDEN. You can't stand me. (*Bitterly.*) Tcha! Why should you? I drink like a fish, and I've got the foulest temper God ever put into a man. You're well out of it.

ROSE. Oh! it isn't because of—because of anything you are.

BLAGDEN. I see. A prior claim, perhaps. (*Suddenly.*) By God!

Enter AGNES.

AGNES. Mr. Capel.

Enter STUART CAPEL.

[*Exit AGNES down L.*

(STUART CAPEL is a smart, well-groomed, fastidious man about town, with an undisturbed, easy, non-chalant manner.)

STUART (*cheerfully*). Good afternoon. (*Comes to above L. of c. table.*)

ROSE (*surprised and delighted*). Stuart!

STUART (*sees BLAGDEN, stops abruptly, becomes cool and short, looks BLAGDEN up and down*). How d'you do? (*BLAGDEN looks from one to the other, draws his own conclusions, cuts STUART deliberately, and goes out. Watches him off.*) Now what—what's the beggar doing here?

ROSE. He's a friend of Dick's.

STUART. Oh, is he? Dick's got some nice friends. (*Then places his hat and stick on table c.*)

ROSE. Why did he . . . why was he so rude to you?

STUART. That's his pretty little way. He doesn't like me.

ROSE. Why?

STUART (*coming down L.*). Oh! just his bad taste.

ROSE. I don't like people to be rude to you.

STUART. No, no more do I. (*Moves to L.C.*) I was up at Oxford with him. Man who had his knife into everybody. Heaps of brains and no money—made him sour—he's had a down on me ever since I—

ROSE. Oh, never mind *him*! (*Goes to him.*) You—you haven't kissed me.

STUART. I must be mad! (*He kisses her.*) Bless you!

ROSE. I'm so glad to see you. (*Clings to him.*)

STUART. Surprised?

ROSE. Yes; but so awfully glad. Your sister's been here. Didn't you meet her? She came with Mrs. Moutrie.

STUART. I thought I saw them outside. (*Breaks away.*) What will your brother say when he sees me?

ROSE. Oh! I—I told him I'd met you again.

STUART. Did you?

ROSE. Yes. He said—he said, of course I couldn't know you unless your sister called.

STUART (*taking out his cigarette case*). May I smoke?

ROSE. Yes. (*She flies to get him the matches from desk c. She lights a match for him.*)

STUART. And what's that chap Blagden been saying to you? (*Puts match-box in his pocket.*)

ROSE. He—he wanted me to marry him.

STUART (*interested*). Did he? Did he really? Well, did you feel you wanted to say YES?

ROSE. You know I didn't!

STUART (*takes her hand*). I say, Rosie, when are we going to——

ROSE (*alarmed, withdraws her hand*). Hush! I'm so afraid someone will hear you. (*She glances round nervously.*)

STUART. It's all right. I suppose you—I suppose you didn't tell the immaculate brother that we know each other pretty well, did you?

ROSE. He thinks I met you once—by accident.

STUART. I should leave him in that unsuspecting belief, if I were you. Ha!—this is a far cry from the cow-house, isn't it?

ROSE. You needn't sneer—Dick isn't the only person who tilled the earth. Adam did too.

STUART (*sits on L. arm of settee*). Oh, he did! If the spirit of progress hadn't stepped in to assist the foreigner we might all be tilling the earth in England still. Good thing if we were!

ROSE. I hate deceiving Dick like this. I hate it!

STUART. Do you? (*Rises.*) But your friend Adam was a nailer at deception. (*Moves to up L. of c. table.*)

ROSE. I—I shan't be able to deceive Dick much longer.

STUART (*puts cigarette down*). What do you mean? (*She turns away.*) Rosie? (*He goes to her, takes her arms and makes her face him.*) Not——?

ROSE. Yes. (*A pause.*)

STUART. I don't believe it!

ROSE. It's true, whether you believe it or not.

STUART. Well, I'm—(*moves away to L.*) Well, you've fairly dished us now. (*Turns to her.*) What's to be done?

ROSE. I suppose we—I suppose we ought to be married—as soon as we can.

STUART (*sharply*). Married?

ROSE. Yes.

STUART (*irritably*). Don't talk nonsense. You know perfectly *well* we can't be married!

ROSE (*terrified and amazed—takes a step backwards*). Stuart! You said . . .

STUART (*irritably*). Oh, it doesn't matter what I *said*! A man says just as many things he doesn't mean as a woman. Don't throw that at me! You've said a great many things you didn't mean.

ROSE. Stuart! But you—

STUART (*raising his hand as though to quieten her*). Now, will you just listen? If we marry, what do you suppose we are going to live on?

ROSE (*R.C., breathlessly*). You've got plenty of money.

STUART (*L.C.*). Well, and where do you suppose it comes from? Just try and grasp the facts.

ROSE. From your father, I suppose.

STUART. Exactly—from my father. And if I married *you*, my father wouldn't provide me with one red herring a week!

ROSE. Oh, he couldn't—he couldn't be so cruel!

STUART. Couldn't he? You haven't had the pleasure of meeting my father. He's a survival of the age that produced mastodons, and he retains the ideas of the time. I need only marry *you*, and we should discover instantly what his particular interpretation of the New Testament actually is—if we didn't know it already.

ROSE. But you—you could work for money.

STUART. Could I? How?

ROSE. There *are* things—there *must* be things you could do.

STUART. Well, what are they? Tell me! I want to know.

ROSE. You've been educated—

STUART. I have—in England. (*Goes to her.*) And what do you imagine is the market price for imparting

Greek (*sits c. of settee*), assuming that I had not been ploughed in Mods? And as I don't happen to be a "Blue" either, I think we may leave the art of teaching the young out of it. Also the art of War. And as I don't know four languages, and shorthand, and wouldn't hire myself out for thirty bob a week if I did, I think we can give Commerce a miss too. So we come down to the labour market. (*ROSE sits at table down R.*) (*Settles himself.*) Cleaning out gutters in a cap with a glazed peak, and "Chelsea Vestry" written on it, in brass. Well, I bar that for purely æsthetic reasons. (*Rises—moves a step to R.*) Don't you understand that I'm simply the illusion known as a private gentleman? And that means precisely (*sits on R. end of settee*)—anyhow in my case—expensive habits, a dearth of all ambition, every recognised vice, practically no stamina, and no ability. I'm an excrescence—I'm not a gentleman at all. However, to bolster up the—illusion, my father provides me with several hundred pounds a year, so that he may be able to refer to me as a barrister—a barrister whom no one employs, and who'd be d——d fools if they did!

ROSE. Then what am *I* to do?

STUART. Well, what is there to do? I possess in my own right about a couple of hundred a year. It doesn't pay my cab fares. Naturally I don't propose to leave you in the cart, but we cannot be hallowed by the Church. I wish we could, if it would give you any satisfaction; but that isn't the point. The point—and the *only* point—is mutton chops. Between us we should want about fourteen a week, shouldn't we? One *must* have them and scores of things like 'em. The climate, for example, demands trousers of *me*, and I'm going to *have* trousers. It may be selfish, but it's become a fixed habit. If I broke myself of it, you'd be no better off, and I should be in Vine Street.

ROSE. Your father's a wicked man.

STUART. No, he's not wicked any more than you are. Wicked's a *silly* word.

ROSE. Then I *pay*. That's what it comes to. I pay.

STUART. Don't you think we *all* pay for *some thing*? Do you think I'd choose to be myself?

ROSE. It's all very well to say this now.

STUART. Oh! call me a blackguard (*rises, moves slowly over to c.*) if it relieves you. As things are reckoned I *am* one. But why not leave human nature out of it?

ROSE. What do you propose?

STUART. As regards the future?

ROSE (*nods*). Yes.

STUART. Well, to begin with, I suppose it will mean trouble here.

ROSE. Probably.

STUART. I shan't look my best for a week or two.

ROSE (*rises passionately*). You've let me in! You've let me trust you—for this! You knew all the time. You knew what you were, and you knew I *didn't* know—you knew I believed in you—you knew I loved you—and you—Oh! (*She breaks off, half choking, sinks into chair again, buries her head on her hands.*)

STUART (*goes to her again, places his hand on her shoulder*). Look here, Rosie. I'm not saying the whole thing isn't a calamity. But what's the use of telling you I'm sorry now? Of course I'm sorry! But I didn't *ask* to be saddled with passions and impulses, and all the rest of it. I've got 'em, and so have you. And I quite agree that I'm—well, anything you like. (*Moves over down c.*) Criminally superfluous. But what's the use of taunting *me*? I'm not responsible for—rotten ethics. I'm a victim myself. We're—we're just up against life.

ROSE (*with spirit*). You mean *I'm* up against life. You're as—you're as clean as you need be. You can go gaily on.

STUART. Oh, of course. You pay! You're a woman. I don't say it's fair. But then—well, what is? (*Enter DICK—he carries some evening papers. He looks at STUART, uncertain who he is. ROSE rises and goes up to piano.*) How do you do?

DICK (*coming down to L. of him*). Mr. Capel—surely?

STUART. Yes.

DICK. I'm very glad to meet you again. (*Shakes hands.*)

STUART. You didn't recognise me?

DICK. I can't say I did. I've just left your sister.

STUART. So I hear. You must come and look *me* up if you will. I should like to have a chat with you.

(Giving DICK his card.) I'm generally to be found waiting for the briefs that don't come.

DICK. Oh, they will. (*Goes over to table down L., places card and papers on it.*)

STUART. Well, I don't know why they should. Good-bye, Miss Blair.

DICK. Oh, don't hurry away.

STUART (*goes to back of desk for hat and stick*). I'm afraid I must.

ROSE. You'll—you'll come again?

STUART. Er—with pleasure.

DICK (*going up to door*). I hope our stairs won't kill you; they're pretty deadly.

STUART. Ah! you get your exercise in a concentrated form. I never get any. Don't forget to look me up.

DICK. Thanks. (*He opens door.*)

STUART. Good-bye.

DICK. Good-bye. (*Follows STUART out.*)

(*ROSE moves slowly up to c. windows. DICK closes door and comes back. DICK goes down L.*)

ROSE. You didn't know him? (*Moves over at back to L.C.*)

DICK (*picks up papers*). I didn't at first. He's altered.

ROSE. You knew her.

DICK (*crosses to R.*). Er—yes. I—I did recognise her.

[*ROSE come down L.*] (*Puts paper on table down R.*)
Blagden gone? (*Glances at them.*)

ROSE. Yes. Dick, he—he asked me to marry him. (*Moves to c.*)

DICK. Well, what did you say? (*He sits at table.*)

ROSE. No. (*Moves to R. end of settee.*)

DICK. Well, I won't pretend I'm sorry. But I don't mind telling you I *am* a bit sorry for *him*. When I was talking to him just now—there's something big about that man you know, in spite of his drawbacks. He drinks a bit I know. But perhaps—perhaps—you could have pulled him up. Men only drink because there's no ideal, no image in their minds; or because they've lost one, perhaps. Poor devil! I'm sorry. Well, old lady, we shall have to think of someone else.

ROSE (*at R. end of settee; breaking down*). Oh, Dick! —I'm—I'm so miserable! (*Sits.*)

DICK (*looks up surprised*). My dear kiddie, what on earth is the matter? What's troubling you? Tell me.

ROSE (*sobbing*). You'll—you'll never speak to me again.

DICK (*rises, to her*). My darling girl, what is it? (*Leans forward to her—suddenly.*) Has that fellow Capel been pestering you?

ROSE. Not pestering me—exactly.

DICK. What then?

ROSE. He says he—he says he—can't marry me. (*Looks away from him.*)

DICK (*puzzled*). Marry you? But why should he marry you? (*Pause.*) Rosie! (*Takes her right arm by his right hand.*) Rosie! Is there—is there any reason why he SHOULD marry you? (*She nods her head, keeping it averted. He understands in dismay, steps back.*) Rosie! (*Goes up to back, then down L. to L. end of settee.*) But you—you said you'd only met him once—by accident.

ROSE (*in a low voice*). Oftener than that.

DICK. How often? (*He waits for her to speak.*) Then everything you've told me has been a lie! Everything through and through! Is *that* what you want me to believe? Why didn't you let me help you? Why need you have deceived me—why?

ROSE. I used to be afraid of wicked things till you laughed at me.

DICK (*incredulously*). Laughed at you? *I laughed* at you?

ROSE. For—believing in Hell, and things like that. You did (*in great despair*), you know you did!

DICK. I never laughed at goodness, Rosie; I may have laughed at superstition. I thought you could distinguish—I thought you—and now you've made yourself as cheap as that cad chose to think you! I was so proud of you. I didn't think anything was good enough for you; and now you—(*Shows acute feeling.*) Oh! (*Turns away to L.*)

ROSE (*brokenly*). Oh, don't reproach me!

DICK (*going back to L. end of settee*). Tell me! Did you think he *would* marry you?

ROSE. Yes.

DICK. He *let* you think so?

ROSE. Yes.

DICK. And now does he refuse ?

ROSE. He says his father would prevent it.

DICK. Why ?

ROSE. Because I'm—who I am, I suppose.

DICK. I suppose his father is a reasonable being. Capel doesn't deny your claim, then ?

ROSE. No.

DICK (*brokenly, turning away again*). My sister—my own sister. (*She breaks down again. He goes to her and sits L. of her, embracing her.*) There, there ! You've been very foolish, dear, but I'll—I'll get you out of it somehow. Poor little girl ! Poor little girl ! I'll see him and hear what he says to *me*. When did he know ?

ROSE. Just now. Oh, Dick, I'm so sorry ! (*Kneels at his feet.*)

DICK (*holding her in his arms*). Sorry ! Rosie, how young you are ! And I thought you—I ought not to have left you so much alone ! But I—my sister ! my own sister !

ROSE (*in a low, hard, hopeless tone*). Everyone will condemn me now, after this. And I shall be a bad woman—a bad woman !

DICK (*very tenderly*). Hush, dear, hush ! You can trust old Dick. (*She sobs. He puts his arm round her.*) There, there, there ! My own little girl ! I'll take care of you ! I'll take care of you ! There, there, there ! There's always old Dick, if all (*curtain begins to fall*) the world goes against you ! There's always old Dick !

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE : *A room in Sir John Capel's house in London.*

Next morning.

(SIR JOHN CAPEL is discovered seated R.C.—he holds “*The Times*”—in a very bad temper. He is a full-blooded, irritable, stubborn, old man, smartly dressed in rather an old-fashioned style—particularly with regard to his collar and the hair on his face. In spite of his bluster, he has dignity and is a gentleman—he fidgets in his chair, and then rises impatiently and crosses to down L. carrying his paper and rings the bell.)

(*Enter R. PARSONS, a butler—he comes to above R.C. table.*)

SIR J. (*angrily*). Did you tell Miss Marjorie that I am waiting for her?

PARSONS. Yes, Sir John.

SIR J. Then what is keeping her? Why does she not come?

PARSONS. Miss Marjorie is cleaning 'er golf clubs, Sir John.

SIR J. Then be good enough to tell her to leave off cleaning her golf clubs. Tell her that I wish to see her immediately. Her golf clubs can wait.

PARSONS (*looking off R.*) Miss Marjorie is coming now, Sir John.

Enter MARJORIE R. dressed for golf.

SIR J. Did you receive my message, or did you not?

MARJ. (*surprised*). Yes, dear, I received it.

SIR J. Then why did you not come immediately—as soon as I sent for you?

MARJ. (*coming to C.*) I was doing something else, dear. I was cleaning my mashie, if you want to know.

SIR J. (L.) Then your mashie, I take it, was of more importance to you than I am?

MARJ. (C.) Well, yes, I suppose it was, if you put it like that.

SIR J. (*coming to L. of her*). (*Glaring*) Insolence! Insolence again!—Sit down! (*Crosses to down R.*)

MARJ. Why? Why shouldn't I stand up, if I want to?

SIR J. Sit down when I tell you to do so.

MARJ. I *won't* sit down. My legs and feet belong to me at present.

SIR J. (*sits R. of R.C. table*). I wonder—I wonder what crime I have committed in the sight of Heaven that I should be visited with a family such as mine! (*Puts "Times" on upper end of R.C. table.*)

MARJ. I don't know. I've often wondered why you didn't let the line die out—and I'm playing in a three ball match as soon as you've done talking.

SIR J. God! give me patience!

MARJ. (*swinging her mashie*). God give you speed!

SIR J. (*fiercely*). I will *not* be spoken to in this insolent, impertinent manner! Just remember that, as your father, I am entitled to some courtesy and deference.

MARJ. Not unless you *earn* it, dear. You must be a friend of mine and a good father. But you're not a friend of mine at all—you only bully me—you're *always* bullying me.

SIR J. (*taking letter from drawer in table*). I have had a letter this morning from my old friend, Sir Michael Bushe—it is about you. To my considerable surprise, I learn that he wishes to marry you.

MARJ. To marry *me*? Sir Michael? Well, I never! He must be off his head!

SIR J. Nevertheless, he is of the opinion that you would be a desirable wife. (*Glancing at letter.*) He refers to—to your various charms—and——

MARJ. Oh, then he can't be *quite* mad. Let me see—is he sixty or seventy? I forget—not that it matters.

SIR J. Indeed? Then let me tell you that I am not prepared to take that view.

MARJ. Well, I don't know that that matters very much either.

SIR J. Do you wish me to lose my temper with you?

MARJ. I shall try to preserve an open mind about it. Besides you've *lost* your temper already.

SIR J. I will not put up with this flippancy. Your marriage is a serious thing.

MARJ. It is—I quite agree with you. And I'm not going to marry a bath chair with a poultice inside it. I'm going to marry a *man*—if I marry at all. His hair will be parted in the middle, and he'll wear a blue serge suit——

SIR J. (*furiously*). I do not wish to be stupefied with all this nonsense.

MARJ. I'm sure I don't! You began! Please may I go and finish cleaning my clubs?

SIR J. No—(MARJORIE *goes up to foot of stairs*) you may not. (*Rises and comes to c.*) What is your age now? Twenty-four.

MARJ. (*indignantly*). I am *not* twenty-four! I'm twenty-two; and with half an hour's notice I can pass for twenty anywhere! (*Sits on arm of armchair L.C.*)

SIR J. I cannot say with any truth that parting with you would cause me great distress.

MARJ. No, I don't suppose it would.

SIR J. Your vulgarity at times is insupportable!

MARJ. Yes, it's in the blood.

SIR J. It's high time you were married. High time! Since your mother's death I have been unable to control you at all. You *say* what you please, you *do* as you please; your views are preposterous! I am unable to control you; so I shall tell poor Bushe that he may attempt to do so, if he likes.

MARJ. (*rising indignantly*). Indeed. May he? *may* he! Is he going to give you a cheque for me? Walk up, gents! Come and 'ave a look at her, gents! (*Swings her mashie. SIR JOHN moves impatiently to fireplace.*) You'd better advertise me in the "Matrimonial Gazette"! I wouldn't marry your gouty old Sir Michael if eternal spinsterhood stared me in the face—and it doesn't! Disgusting old frump!

SIR J. (*exploding*). Be silent! I have warned you once before this morning—I will not be perpetually insulted in this—in this manner—by my children!

MARJ. I was thinking of Sir Michael—not about *you*. Oh, if only you had a sense of humour.

SIR J. Bushe is a most eminent distinguished man! What more do you want or expect than his attentions? He does you a great honour.

MARJ. And I shall do him a great injury—if he has the cheek to speak to *me*. (*Comes down to c.*) And I shall do it with a niblick and with both my boots. (*Enter STUART R., he comes to top of table R.C., picks up "Times."*) So you may tell him what to expect.

(SIR JOHN *blusters to her.*)

STUART. 'Morning, sir. 'Morning, Margie. Oh, isn't the household at peace?

MARJ. No, it isn't. (*Crosses to down R.*)

SIR J. Have you any influence with your sister?

MARJ. No. (*Sits on edge of R.C. table.*)

STUART (*standing above table*). Not the slightest.

SIR J. Sir Michael Bushe wishes to marry her.

STUART (*coming to c.*). Does he, b'Jove? Well done, Margie!

MARJ. (*scathingly*). Well done!

STUART. Ain't you going to snap him up?

MARJ. No, I am *not* going to snap him up.

STUART. Why not? With you as a perpetual irritant he wouldn't last a twelvemonth.

MARJ. Well?

STUART. Well, then you'd have about seven thousand a year to bootle about with; you'd look charming in black; and you'd be independent (*looks at SIR JOHN*) of Cæsar.

MARJ. And yet I'm not going to snap him up.

SIR J. (*angrily, coming to c.*). Then go your own way! I wash my hands of you. Go your own way. But if you marry *without* my consent, you know what to expect. Not a stick or a bawbee—not a stick or a bawbee.

STUART (*to MARJORIE*). What's a bawbee? (*MARJORIE moves to R.*)

SIR J. (*wrathfully*). As for you, sir, you are as impertinent and as good-for-nothing as your sister. The attitude of children to their parents nowadays passes all comprehension and belief.

STUART. It always has, Sir. The wail of the discarded parent rings through history.

SIR J. A little more, sir, and you shall cease to be my son or live under my roof. Exist on your own pittance. If you can't conform to my prejudices——

STUART. That's the word, sir—that's the word.

SIR J. Respect my wishes—or take yourself off.
(*Goes up to above R.C. table.*)

STUART. So I would, sir—but the hem of your garment is an unfortunate necessity.

SIR J. I'll trouble you for the "Times"——

STUART (*looking into the paper*). Yes, sir, just half a—Surrey all out——

SIR J. (*loudly*). Did you hear what I said to you?

STUART. I did, sir, deaf though I am. (*Hands paper to SIR JOHN.*) Thank you. (*SIR JOHN grabs it with an angry exclamation and exits R.*) (*Sits L. of R.C. table.*) Delightful companion, our father—courteous, gentle. He'll sit on that "Times" all the morning.

MARJ. (*R., exasperated*). Oh, I feel as if I'd been stripped. Things must be pretty bad when one's own father tries to marry one to a corpse. (*Comes to R. of R.C. table.*)

STUART. Things are rotten bad. You see papa and his period never understood human nature. They understand museums, but not life. Casabianca's about their mark—Casabianca (*yawns*) and woolly mats. Wax fruit—the parlour period—deadly. Fortunately, papa is gifted with a feeble intellect or he might have been simply paralysing.

MARJ. He's pretty bad.

STUART (*leaning back and stretching himself*). And he'll never die—never!

MARJ. Well (*moving over to up C.R. of staircase*), I'm playing in a three ball match. (*Swings her mashie.*)

STUART. I say, Margie, failing old Bushe——

MARJ. Well?

STUART. Have you got any other plans?

MARJ. Matrimonial plans?

STUART. Yes.

MARJ. What right have you to ask me?

STUART. None whatever.

MARJ. Then if I were you I shouldn't ask.

STUART. Thanks very much.

MARJ. What for?

STUART (*laughing*). Who's the man?

Enter PARSONS R., he comes to above table.

PARSONS. Mr. Blair to see you, sir.

STUART. Who?

PARSONS. Mr. Blair, sir.

STUART (*significantly*). Oh!

MARJ. Whatever does he want to see you for?

STUART (*leaning back*). D'you expect me to do puzzles at this time o'day? Let me wake up.

MARJ. Well, are you going to leave Mr. Blair standing on the mat?

STUART. Show him up, Parsons, if you must. (*Takes cigarette from box on table and lights it.*)

PARSONS. Yes, sir.

[*Exit PARSONS.*]

STUART. Don't be late for that three ball match of yours.

MARJ. I won't.

STUART. I hear you called on the Blairs yesterday.

MARJ. I did—Who told you?

STUART. A little bird. (*Rises, gets behind his chair and pushes it slightly under table.*) Do you imagine the governor will stand your knowing them?

MARJ. The governor won't be consulted.

STUART. And I suppose we may call old Bushe off?

MARJ. You may call him anything you like. I suppose Mr. Blair has come to see you professionally?

STUART (*slowly*). Er—yes—(*crossing to L.*)—I should think so.

MARJ. Then I think it's jolly nice of him.

Enter PARSONS.

PARSONS. Mr. Blair.

Enter BLAIR.

MARJ. Good morning, Mr. Blair.

DICK. How do you do? (*Shakes hands.*)

MARJ. You get up early.

DICK. I really called to see your brother.

MARJ. Ah, he gets up late.

STUART (*his back to fireplace*). 'Morning!

DICK. Good morning.

MARJ. How's your sister?

DICK. She's—she's not very well.

MARJ. Oh, I'm sorry—nothing serious, I hope?

DICK. At present I'm not able to say.

STUART. Out you go, Margie; Mr. Blair wants to see me.

MARJ. Well, do let me be decently polite. Give your sister my love, Mr. Blair, and tell her to get well soon.

DICK. Thank you, I will.

MARJ. (*shakes hands*). Good-bye.

DICK. Good-bye. [*Exit MARJORIE R.*]

(*DICK sees her out and closes door, then comes slowly to L.C.*)

STUART (*coolly*). Is it any use offering you a cigarette?

DICK. You understand, I suppose, why I am here?

STUART. Well, yes, I suppose so. I imagine you have come more or less in the spirit of justice.

DICK. You have retracted your promise to marry my sister. I have come to tell you that it is too late for you to do that.

STUART. Well, of course there may be two opinions about it.

DICK. I see. You insult the lady who took your promises in good faith.

STUART. Oh, no, I don't. But as a man who uses his brains, you'll agree that there may be more than one point of view, even where a woman is concerned.

DICK. Perhaps you'll be more explicit.

STUART. What about?

DICK. About the woman who is concerned now. What are your reasons for behaving as you propose to do?

STUART (*coming to him*). There's only one reason—practically.

DICK. And what is that?

STUART. Caste.

DICK (*moves away slightly to c.*). I don't accept it.

STUART. No more do I, personally. As a reasonable being I regard it as ridiculous. But circumstances compel me to conform to it all the same.

DICK. What circumstances?

STUART. The prehistoric water jump who masquerades as my father.

DICK. Do you ask me seriously to listen to that?

Do you ask me to be propitiated by the argument of Vere de Vere?

STUART. In the circumstances, I'm afraid you'll have to be.

DICK. We're not children, Mr. Capel, and this is the twentieth century. I address you as a man standing on your own feet.

STUART (*sits armchair up L.C.*). Well, if I were you, I shouldn't, because I don't stand on 'em. I'm propped up by this progenitor of mine. I suppose he gets some sort of satisfaction out of it, or he wouldn't do it. But if he didn't prop me up I should perish. In other words, I should perish if I were to marry your sister. My progenitor would withdraw the prop—that's the sort of man he is!

DICK (*scathingly*). And, knowing this, you did what you have done?

STUART. I imagine that's why you are here—isn't it? (*Pause.*)

DICK (*scathingly*). Do you call yourself a man, Mr. Capel?

STUART. No. As a matter of fact I don't. I call myself a sign of the times. I call myself a finger-post—pointing in the wrong direction.

DICK (*moves away to R.*). Let me suggest that you should endeavour to point the other way.

STUART (*rises—goes to L.C.*). Will you go a little further and tell me how to do it? Perhaps you won't find that quite so easy. Destructive criticism is *not* very difficult.

DICK (*coming back to STUART*). Am I to understand that you have no personal objection to—to fulfilling your obligations?

STUART. Why should I have? All I ask is to be maintained in ease and comfort. If I married your sister my ease and comfort would cease. They'd *cease*, inevitably. So should I. Well, I don't want to cease. Surely you can see for yourself that *I* don't control the situation?

DICK. You merely created it.

STUART. Exactly—I merely created it. I'm merely—what I am. But I don't *approve* of the situation. I think it's perfectly awful—don't you?

DICK. Are you speaking seriously?

STUART (*emphatically*). Well, of course, I'm speaking seriously. (*Goes right to him.*) Don't *you* think it's a serious thing that I should be permitted to walk about the earth like a blight? What's the use of me? What am I for? The only possible thing I can do is harm. (*Crosses over to R.*) Why, I can't even support myself. Somebody else has got to do even that. (*A pause. Turns to DICK.*) Well, when are we coming to blows? I imagined that would occur *early* in the interview. You don't expect me to *lend* you a horsewhip, do you?

DICK (*moves a step towards him*). Mr. Capel, as far as I am able to understand your remarks at all, I gather that your dread is poverty?

STUART. Well?

DICK. Then I have something to propose.

STUART. One moment. (*A step to him.*) Let's know where we are—I've been having a mental picture of a pool of blood. I thought on these occasions someone always demanded satisfaction of somebody else.

DICK. I *am* demanding it.

STUART. Oh, well, then let's get it over. (*Puts down cigarette on tray on table R.C.*) Leave me a tooth or two in my head if you can. (*DICK remains standing still, quietly.*) Oh, aren't we to have the traditional thing?

DICK (*gravely*). I think we've had that.

STUART. But we're not to be thorough? I'm delighted. (*Sits on edge of table—picks up his cigarette.*) You said just now you had something to propose. What is it?

DICK (*coming close up to table R.C.*). If you marry my sister I undertake to provide her with an income of three hundred a year.

STUART. In order that I may marry her?

DICK. Yes.

STUART. Thanks, I decline.

DICK. What?

STUART. I decline.

DICK (*angrily*). Then—*five* hundred a year—and damn you!

STUART. Not for double—thanks very much. I've got my code.

DICK. Indeed! (*Steps back.*) May one ask precisely what your code is?

STUART. It doesn't include being kept by the man who—No, No, thank you. If my mission in life is to be a toy, a poisonous sort of toy, I prefer to be a burden upon the individual who made a toy of ME. (*A pause—DICK brings chair from up L.C. to down c., sits.*)

DICK. You're a barrister, aren't you, by trade?

STUART. Well, my name's painted up in the Temple somewhere, I believe—yes.

DICK. Don't you see that by refusing money from me you're shying at a mere convention?

STUART (*turns to him quickly—still sitting on table and placing his left foot on chair L. of R.C. table*). And what in Heaven's name are you doing? Do you mean to tell me that your sister is any less pure because—why, you're mad. You tell me I ought to marry her—not because I love her, not because she loves me, not because you or anyone else approves of me—but simply because of the neighbours! The neighbours! Because of what a lot of cackling, unhealthy old hens of women will say if I don't.

DICK (*quietly*). And because of the distress you will cause her if you DON'T.

STUART. And what about the distress it will cause me, and her, too, if I do?

DICK. That's your last word, then?

STUART. Well, I should hope it was. (*Rises and stands in front of table.*) I've got that amount of kick in me.

DICK. I see (*rises*). Then I'm afraid there's only one thing left for me to do. (*Goes up stage, puts chair back.*)

STUART (*smiling*). Are we going to have blood after all?

DICK (*comes down R.C.*) I shall appeal to your father.

STUART (*smiling*). Really? Do you know my father? Well, I daresay he'll amuse you. And if by any miracle you can induce him to behave like an ordinary human being, you'll have done a great work—you'll have put in a psychic sort of morning. But I don't know how you're going to do it. Still, if you can induce him to provide me with enough money, I'll marry your sister with

the greatest of pleasure. In a church, if you like—and a damned bad husband I shall make her. Then perhaps you'll think you've done your duty by her. We'll have a talk with my old sheet anchor. I'll get him in (*Cross down L. rings the bell*). (*DICK goes down R.*) You understand that my parent is not in the least aware of his deficiencies. I'm a far more tragic figure than he'll ever be. (*Comes to C.*) I fancy he regards himself as rather a helpful member of the community. There's a sort of majestic oblivion about him—well, you'll see for yourself. But you can get some idea of his absolute uselessness by the fact that I'm his son. (*Enter PARSONS, who comes to L. of upper end of R.C. table. C.*) Oh, Parsons, tell Sir John to come here, will you? (*PARSONS is about to go.*) No—stop a minute—you'd better not put it quite like that, perhaps—that's the way he puts it to me. Tell him that I shall be much obliged if he'll kindly come here for a moment. Put it how you like—use your tact. (*Exit PARSONS R.*) As a writer of books, you'll be interested in my father—he's the victim of inherited wealth and a totally undeveloped brain. Intellectually, any cool-headed flea could give him points and beat him. I should describe him as a semi-vitalized jelly floating about in a fog.

DICK. There's just one thing I should like to know, Mr. Capel. May I depend upon your support when I appeal to you—to your progenitor.

STUART. What? Yes, of course you may. One of my chief interests is to thwart him. (*Enter SIR JOHN R. Moves over to L.*) Ah, here is my father. Come in, sir, let me introduce you to Mr. Blair. (*SIR JOHN comes round to C., glancing at DICK as he does so.*) He's come to have a little talk to you about me.

SIR J. Is that why you sent for me?

STUART. Well, yes, sir—that, combined with the pleasure of your company.

SIR J. Blair. The name is familiar to me.

STUART. Mr. Blair is an author of some repute.

SIR J. Ah, to be sure. You are young Blair of—quite so—quite so—Yes, I remember being told that you had abandoned farming for other pursuits. A pity, I think, a pity—a pity!

STUART (*moves over to L. of SIR JOHN*). Mr. Blair hasn't come to hear your opinion about himself, sir, but to hear your opinion of *me*—and my behaviour towards his sister. (*Goes to fireplace.*)

SIR J. I was not aware that you *had* a sister, Mr. Blair—or possibly I had forgotten.

STUART. Do you see yourself as a benevolent sort of dove?

SIR J. (*angrily, moving over to STUART and putting his hands behind him*). I see myself in Bedlam if you continue this impertinent chattering.

STUART. Fire away, Blair.

SIR J. (*to DICK, taking a step to c.*) Well, sir, what can I do for you? (*Pause.*)

DICK. Your son has compromised my sister. (*A pause.*)

SIR J. (*turns to STUART*). Is this true?

STUART. Look here, sir, Mr. Blair's a busy man; don't waste his time with silly questions. Of course it's true, or he wouldn't be here.

SIR J. I—(*Turns to DICK again.*) What else have you to say?

DICK. Your son has allowed my sister to suppose that he would marry her. I understand now that he declines.

SIR J. (*irritably*). Be good enough to tell me, one of you, what actually has taken place.

DICK (*coming up to him*). What has taken place is this: an innocent girl has been outraged and degraded under a false promise of marriage. (*Slight pause.*)

SIR J. I begin to understand. Well, Mr. Blair, I cannot say you have told me anything which tends to make me think more highly of your sister.

STUART (*rises quickly*). I knew it—I knew it! I'd have laid you any odds he'd say that!

SIR J. (*turning and coming over to him, furiously*). Will you be silent, sir? Put out that cigarette!

STUART. Why, what's the matter with it?

SIR J. Put it out, I tell you. (*STUART throws away his cigarette into fireplace, takes out his case and lights another.*) So you do not deny these outrageous charges? You defend your debaucheries? Are you not thoroughly ashamed of the part you have played, sir?

STUART. Well, you see, I haven't played a part—I've been perfectly natural.

SIR J. (*angrily*). It comes to this then; you have got this girl, this farmer's daughter, into trouble?

DICK. Sir John, I will tolerate no insulting criticisms of my sister—whatever she may have done. (SIR JOHN *turns to him*.) Understand that! Your son tells me he is prepared to keep his promise provided that you approve—provided that you make it possible for him to do so. I appeal to you, as a gentleman, Sir John, to do the proper thing.

SIR J. If I were to do the proper thing, sir, I should shoot my own son.

STUART (*coolly*). What good would that do? The proper thing to do is to keep me alive and give the bride a diamond bracelet for her pluck.

SIR J. (*turning to him, violently*). You rascal! You godless rascal!

DICK. Sir John! I am not concerned with your quarrels with your son—I am waiting for your answer to me.

SIR J. (*taking a step towards him*). Then my answer, Mr. Blair, is this: if my son marries beneath him, if he marries without my consent, he won't get a penny from me—he won't get a penny from me. Let that be understood—finally! (*Crosses to R. of R.C. table.*) (*A pause—DICK gets behind chair L. of R.C. table.*)

DICK. And what sort of marriage do you think is beneath him? Do you suggest that marriage with my sister would degrade your son? (STUART *sits in arm-chair L.C.*)

SIR J. I suggest nothing, sir. But I shall not consent. It is preposterous that I should be called upon to do so—in such a case as this. I admit that the behaviour of my son is deplorable—disreputable, and I *sympathise* with any woman whom he may have victimised. (*Crosses to L.C.*) But marriage is another matter.

DICK (*indignantly bringing the chair he is holding to the floor heavily*). By God! you shall give me a better answer than that. I'll have a better answer than that out of you. Do you think I'm to be silenced by bluster? Do you think I am to be suppressed by you or the vapid excuses of your son? I am fighting for my sister's soul,

and I expect from you the deference, the dignity, which human tragedy demands. (*A pause—SIR JOHN crosses slowly to fireplace.*)

DICK (*moves up to R. of staircase*). Your attitude, I presume, is based upon the grounds of class?

SIR J. That is so. I have no wish to wound your sensibilities — but you force me to confess that my objection is based upon those grounds—that is to say, principally.

DICK. Then perhaps you will define for me the class, the type, your son distinguishes. (*A pause—SIR JOHN avoids Dick's eye.*) You appear to find some difficulty in doing so. Then let me do it for you. Your son is a briefless barrister without visible means of support. In the eyes of decent men, your son is a contemptible waster, a profligate mill-stone dragging at the neck of the outrageous system which tolerates him and produced him. A club and racecourse parasite. Incapable of work or honour—or the rudiments of common faithfulness. That's what you, in your protected idleness, have made of him. And you dare to sneer at me. (*Bursting out.*) By God! Father and son together, you suggest to me the spectacle of shameless vermin, of hideous, obscene things crawling out of the light under a stone. That's the true picture of your class, sir—and deny it if you can! (*Slight pause.*)

SIR J. (*trembling with suppressed passion*). The Almighty has given you words, Mr. Blair, and He has denied them to me. But let me say this: you seem willing enough to profit by my son's deficiencies—and mine.

DICK (*blazing*). Profit by them! I have offered to support your son! (*Moves over to back of chair R.C.*)

STUART (*rises—to SIR JOHN*). And of course that's up to you. Now, just come down to brass tacks. Something's got to be done. If you'll allow me to marry Miss Blair, I'll take five hundred a year off you and settle the thing. That's letting you down pretty light. Will you agree to it?

SIR J. (*furiously*). Be silent! (*STUART sits again. Crosses to C.*) I will admit, Mr. Blair, that you have a

case. I will go so far as to admit that. But I will *not* admit that it is to be remedied by marriage.

DICK (*crosses down R.*) By what, then?

SIR J. We will consider—we will consider. (*Sits R. of table R.C.*)

Enter MARJORIE from up L. on rostrum unperceived—she stands at L. end of balustrade.

DICK (*comes over and sits in chair L. of R.C. table*). Before you begin, Sir John, let me put this to you in another way. Suppose—suppose *you* were the supplicant. Suppose *you* were appealing to *me* to—to reinstate some relative of *yours*—we will say your daughter—(*STUART leans forward in chair*). Suppose *I* had compromised your daughter?

SIR J. I will not suppose anything so monstrous.

DICK (*leans forward to SIR JOHN*). Monstrous? You couldn't have selected a more eloquent word. But suppose this monstrous thing had happened—what would you do? Would you beg me to *marry* your daughter? Would you wish her to keep her place in the sun or to lose it?

SIR J. I decline to discuss the proposition, and I decline to be pilloried by you, sir, or to submit to your cross-examination. My son must conduct his love affairs as he pleases—they are no concern of mine. But on this occasion I am prepared to—to be dispassionate because you come, I understand, from a locality where once I commanded some respect. But I am not to be bullied or intimidated. I confess I dread publicity and scandal. This affair must be hushed up—it must be buried and forgotten. I fully recognise your sister's right to compensation, and if you will tell me what sum—what sum of money——

DICK (*controlling himself*). Money! You dare to offer me money! (*Bursting out.*) What sum of money would compensate you in your daughter's case?

SIR J. Come, come, sir, in the event of a child——

DICK. In the event of a child in your daughter's case——

SIR J. (*hotly*). We are not discussing my daughter's case.

DICK (*shouting*). By God! You make me wish we were. You almost make me wish—we were.

SIR J. (*rising angrily—takes a step down*). Silence, sir! I'll have no more of this.

DICK (*rising and moving down*). Silence to Hell! And you may thank your God you're old!

MARJ. Mr. Blair!

(STUART rises, and they all turn and look at her in astonishment.)

SIR J. (*furiously*). What are you doing here?

MARJ. (*indignantly*). What are you doing here? You two—men. (*She comes slowly down to L. of DICK. She turns to DICK with a quiet, friendly little smile*). Mr. Blair, will you give your sister my love? Don't forget—and leave this to me. (MARJORIE holds out her hand. DICK pauses for half a second, then he takes her hand reverentially. Exit DICK R. Turns scathingly on STUART.) You cad! You mean, unthinkable little cad!

STUART (*indicating SIR JOHN*). And what price him?

MARJ. (*scathingly*). What price him? A non-starter!

SIR J. (*furiously, and taking a step towards her*). I will not tolerate this! Remember you are my daughter!

MARJ. (*stepping back*). No! There's your blood—there! In him! (*Points to STUART*.) I hope you're proud of it. (SIR JOHN turns away to R.)

STUART. Well, I'm not!

MARJ. (*to STUART*). Then prove it. If you are a man, prove it. But I don't think you are. (*Looks out in front of her*.) As far as I'm concerned, I was born to-day—here, in this room, three minutes ago. And I'm a woman! A woman! I'll show you just exactly what that means! [*Exit MARJORIE up stairs to L.*]

SIR J. You unparalleled young fool. You insolent—(*Takes cigar from box*) philandering young puppy. (*Sits R.*) You've subjected me to indignities such as I—Now understand this—if you marry that girl I'll disown you. I'll cut the entail. (*Cuts cigar*.) I'll disown you. I've tolerated your flippancy, and your gambling, and your debts—but I decline to tolerate that. If you marry her out you go. (*Strikes a match*.) Out you go—neck and crop, and be damned to you. And your rustic wife may console you, if she can—but you'll get nothing further from me. You won't get a sixpence from me—understand

that! Not a sixpence—(*lights a cigar*)--not a sixpence.
(*Puffs at cigar.*)

STUART (*quietly*). I'd like to pay you out for creating me. I wonder if I could. I wonder if *I* could grow up—and be a man.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE: *Dick Blair's flat. Same as Act I. Evening. Telephone on table down R. Music on piano, which is open. Chair behind settee, C. Inner door open. Curtains drawn. Lamps alight. Brackets out. Table L. of window removed and table from back of settee in its place.*

TIME: 11.30 p.m. *Curtain rises on an empty stage.*

(The outer bell rings. SERVANT enters through lobby from L. and opens front door, disclosing MARJORIE in evening dress.)

MARJ. Is Mr. Blair at home?

AGNES. No, miss.

MARJ. Oh, do you think he will be long?

AGNES. I can't say, miss.

MARJ. I wonder if I might wait a few minutes?

AGNES. Oh yes, miss.

(MARJORIE comes inside. SERVANT closes door.)

MARJ. *(coming down L. and crossing to R.)*. DID MR. BLAIR DINE AT HOME?

AGNES *(stands L. of settee C.)*. No, miss, but I don't think he will be very long.

MARJ. Is Miss Blair out too?

AGNES. Yes, miss. Would you care to look at the paper, miss? *(She hands her the "Sketch" from table L. of windows.)*

MARJ. *(coming up R. of settee)*. Oh, thank you. *(Looks at table down R.)* I wonder if I might use the telephone?

AGNES. Oh yes, miss.

MARJ. Mr. Blair didn't say how long he would be, I suppose?

AGNES. No, miss; but he isn't generally late when he dines out. He comes back to his writing.

MARJ. Thank you.

[Exit SERVANT L.]

(MARJORIE puts paper on table down R., sits, and takes up telephone receiver.)

MARJ. Two-seven-four-six Gerrard! Two—seven—four—six Gerrard! *(She waits with a smile, drumming her fingers on the table till she is put through.)* Oh! is that two-seven-four-six Gerrard? Is that you, Parsons? Yes. Is Sir John in yet? Well, I want you to tell him, when he does come in, that I left a note for him in the smoking room. Parsons, I don't want him to get it till—wait a minute!—*(She looks at clock on table R.)* Till about half-past eleven. Perhaps it would be better if you gave it to him yourself. Do you quite understand? Not before half-past eleven. Thank you. *(She rings off, rises, and looks round the room, still humming to herself. She glances at one or two books, moves up R., and then comes down [door slam] and places her cloak on R. end of settee, and then sits down at the piano and plays.)*

Enter DICK, carrying his hat up L. He pauses, astonished and pleased. MARJORIE stops playing.

DICK. You!

MARJ. Yes, I believe so.

(Dick closes door and comes behind settee to L. of her, to her.)

DICK. I'm delighted to see you, but . . . what on earth are you doing here?

MARJ. *(simply)*. I've come to stay here.

DICK *(puzzled)*. Ah—*(Slight pause.)* I'm afraid I . . . I don't quite understand.

MARJ. *(smiling)*. Don't you?

DICK *(looking round)*. Is Rosie at home?

MARJ. I don't think so. I've not seen her.

DICK. How long have you been here?

MARJ. Oh!—*(looking at clock on table down R.)*—about five minutes, I should think. Isn't this a pretty thing? I simply love it! *(She plays a few bars. Dick moves to her and leans on piano.)*

DICK. Just stop playing for a second, will you? *(She finishes off.)* Thank you. Now, I love elaborate jokes myself . . . but I do like to understand them. So will you . . . ?

MARJ. But this isn't a joke.

DICK. Oh! Well, just tell me about it. Tell me how long you propose to stop? You say you've come to stay here . . .

MARJ. Yes. I want to talk to you about that. I don't quite know . . . How long does it take to become compromised? I'll stay as long as you like. I want to be quite compromised. I didn't bring anything with me, because I thought that would make it look so much worse. So I just came away as I was.

DICK. I see. May one ask precisely why you did this?

MARJ. (*hesitating*). Well, it's a little awkward to explain—I thought . . .

DICK (*interrupting*). Just half a minute. Tell me something, will you? Have you got some sort of plot in your mind? I mean this: Are you by any chance trying to turn the tables on your father?

MARJ. (*simply*). Yes.

DICK. I see. (*Moves down R. and over to L.C. Turning to her.*) You've deliberately come here to put yourself in my power?

MARJ. Yes.

DICK. You heard what I said—this morning? (*MARJORIE nods.*) And did you think I should agree? Did you think I should fall in with your plan? (*MARJORIE runs her R. hand along the edge of the piano.*) Tell me. (*Puts his hat down on L. end of settee.*)

MARJ. Well (*rises and comes down to C.*), that's what I wanted to ask you about. I didn't know. Why shouldn't you agree?

DICK. I'll tell you why. (*Moves to her.*) Do you know, I've been in love with you for seven years?

MARJ. Yes.

DICK (*astonished. Steps back*). Oh! you do know that?

MARJ. Do you know I've been in love with *you* for seven years?

DICK. No.

MARJ. Well, I have.

DICK. Well, I'm—I suppose I'm awake. I feel rather like a red-nosed clown in a circus. I presume that's the effect of immense joy.

MARJ. Feel how my heart's beating.

(*He takes her in his arms and kisses her passionately.*)

DICK. "My princess! My princess!"

(*He releases her, and she sinks down on R. end of settee.*)

MARJ. I believe this is a dream.

DICK (*looking round*). I say, we must pull ourselves together. (*She buries her face in the sofa cushions. DICK stands looking at her vaguely.*) Princess, this is serious. (*She takes no notice.*) Princess, d'you hear what I'm saying?

MARJ. (*looking up and wiping her nose*). What?

DICK. You'll have to go home. Come along. I'll take you. It's getting late. (*Takes her L. hand and helps her to her feet.*)

MARJ. But I'm *not* going home.

DICK. Oh, yes, you are.

MARJ. Why?

DICK. Why, because I've been in love with you for seven years.

MARJ. That's why I'm going to stay.

DICK. No; that's why you're going home.

MARJ. Well, you'll see.

DICK (*steps back*). Are you going to defy me?

MARJ. (*simply*). Yes, of course.

DICK. Oh!

MARJ. (*moving to him*). Don't you see what I'm driving at? I'm giving you a chance to save your sister.

DICK. I know.

MARJ. And aren't you going to take it?

DICK. No.

MARJ. But—aren't you going to marry me?

DICK. Oh yes, I'm going to do that.

MARJ. (*relieved*). Oh! all right then. I shall just go to sleep till I'm compromised. (*She curls herself up on the sofa and pretends to be sleepy.*) [DICK watches her and moves down L.] Tell me if anyone comes. And I like my tea at half-past seven, bath at eight. [DICK goes up L. to back.] (*Pause.*) This is a lovely sofa. I'm going—[DICK goes down R.]—to dream about you. (*She smiles up at him.*) Lots of people know I'm here. [DICK goes up C. and looks out of windows.] (*Pause.*) I was seen coming in. (*Pause.*) Everyone will know to-morrow—and they'll miss me at home. (*Pause.*) My father will come and implore you to marry me—to save my good name. [DICK comes down L. and sits on arm of armchair.] (*Pause.*) And you'll refuse. (*Pause.*) You'll refuse till

he lets my brother marry Rosie. (*Pause.*) And then you'll marry *me*—(*pause*)—to save my reputation. Good night.

DICK (*incredulously*). Have you thought all this out?

MARJ. I'm asleep.

DICK. Princess!

MARJ. What? (*Looks up.*)

DICK. Have you thought all this out?

MARJ. Yes, of course I have.

DICK (*in astonishment*). Whatever sort of girl are you?

MARJ. I'm a woman. I grew up to-day—this morning.

(*DICK goes to back of settee, sits on it, and leans over to her, greatly touched.*)

DICK (*takes her hand*). Princess, it's magnificent of you! It's fine of you! It's tremendous! But of course you must put all ideas of that sort out of your beloved little head. Be a dear girl and let me take you home. I couldn't save even Rosie like that.

MARJ. But you must.

DICK. I can't let you make yourself responsible for Rosie's mistakes. I didn't mean what I said this morning.

MARJ. But I meant what *I* said this morning; and I mean what I'm saying now.

DICK. I know you do; but you've got to be sensible. If you go on like this—(*trying to appear stern*)—I won't marry you.

MARJ. Oh yes you will.

DICK. How do *you* know?

MARJ. You can't do without me.

DICK. Listen. Be serious. It'll be quite all right if you go now. It isn't very late yet, and people will think you came to see Rosie.

MARJ. She isn't here.

DICK. No. . . I wonder where she can be?

MARJ. (*reproachfully*). I don't believe you care for me a bit.

DICK. Don't you? I care for you so much that this plot of yours seems absolutely hideous.

MARJ. And doesn't Rosie's predicament seem absolutely hideous too?

DICK (*gravely*). Yes.

MARJ. Now listen to me. (*She puts her feet down.*)

This idea of mine is quite practical. Just think. Just think how you could score off my father. Isn't it tempting?

DICK. Very. But I mustn't be tempted.

MARJ. But it doesn't really make me cheap—not me, myself. (*Bell rings.*)

DICK (*rises*). Confound it! Somebody's come. (*Crosses to L.*)

MARJ. You see, even Providence is against you. I shall be compromised, in spite of you! (*He goes up L. and down again.*) I'm to be caught with you here, without a chaperon, alone, in the middle of the night. I shan't have a rag of reputation left.

DICK. Oh yes, you will. I shan't open the door.

MARJ. Your servant will do that.

DICK. She won't. (*He rushes to the door and intercepts AGNES in the hall, just as she is about to open the front door.*) Agnes, don't open the door, I'm not at home.

(*MARJORIE rises and gets R. of settee.*)

AGNES. Very good, sir. (*She retires, he closes door. DICK remains at door.*)

MARJ. (*leaning on end of settee*). And what do you imagine Agnes thinks?

DICK. I don't care a damn what she thinks! I shall give her the sack in the morning.

MARJ. That's just, isn't it? Still I daresay she'll have a good gossip before she goes.

DICK. You must have a brain like—you're a sort of female Bismarck. (*Bell. Comes down to c.*) Now, look here, if you'll promise to go now—I'll marry you next week.

MARJ. (*firmly*). No. (*Moves down R.*) I'm not going to marry you now—at all. You're not the man I thought you were.

DICK. What!

MARJ. I won't marry a man I can't respect—ever!

DICK (*goes to her*). And don't you think you could respect me—if you tried *very* hard?

MARJ. (*turning to him*). How can I respect you unless you compromise me?

DICK. Good Lord! And you call this being a woman!

MARJ. (*stubbornly*). You're simply trying to kill my sense of honour.

DICK. I'm not. Upon my soul I'm not. I'm only trying to preserve my own.

MARJ. Then go and open that door.

DICK. I will not. (*Bell rings again.*)

MARJ. If you don't—I shall.

DICK. You won't! (*He goes L.*)

(*She goes up R., and makes for the door. As she reaches it, DICK seizes her by the wrist, brings her down quickly, and pushes her to C.*)

MARJ. That's right! Be brutal! I could divorce you for that. (*Puts her hands behind her back.*) Very well, then, I shall simply stand here and scream. (*Bell.*)

DICK (*L.C. desperately*). For God's sake don't be mad! Will you go and wait in another room while I see who that is?

MARJ. (*doubtfully*). I don't know.

DICK (*earnestly*). Please!

MARJ. Tell me what time it is.

DICK (*looking at his watch*). A quarter to twelve.

MARJ. Oh! well, as it's only a quarter to twelve I will wait in another room, because I'm sure I'm not compromised yet. I feel too respectable. But I shall come back whenever I want to—and I must have a room with a keyhole. Where shall I go? (*Bell.*)

DICK (*much relieved*). Have any mortal thing you like, only go in there! (*He points to room L. and moves towards it.*)

MARJ. (*pausing*). No. On second thoughts, I think I'll stay where I am.

DICK (*desperately, taking a step towards her*). Now, look here. Unless you do what I tell you . . .

MARJ. (*interrupting*). I shall not do anything you tell me unless . . .

DICK. Well, unless what?

MARJ. Anyone can see you don't know much about women.

DICK. Oh, don't I? Come here. (*She tiptoes towards him and then stops.*) (*Savagely.*) Come here! (*She moves close to him. He kisses her vigorously and releases her.*)

MARJ. Well, I never! How many women have you kissed?

DICK (*scowling*). Thousands!

MARJ. You awful fibber! I don't believe you've kissed anyone except me.

DICK. And if you don't go into that room—(*points to it*)—I'll never kiss you again.

MARJ. (*easily*). Oh yes, you will.

DICK (*savagely*). I won't.

MARJ. You'll kiss me now if I want you to.

DICK. I won't! I won't! I will NOT!

MARJ. You—*will*. (*He kisses her passionately again.*)

DICK. Oh, you angel—(*Kiss*) you—vampire—(*Kiss*)—you devil!—(*Kiss*) you snake—(*Kiss*). (*Knocking starts*)—you darling!

MARJ. (*laughing*). Any more?

DICK. No—Yes. Go in. (*Passes her over to door L.*) [*Bell and knock*] (*She laughs and goes in.*) (*DICK goes up and switches up lights by switch R. of door, then opens the front door disclosing BLAGDEN, who is hanging on to the knocker very drunk.*)

BLAGDEN (*thickly*). Hullo!

DICK. Oh, it's you?

BLAGDEN. Is your name Blair? Why don't you invite me to cross the threshold?

DICK. I'm very busy.

BLAGDEN. So'm I. Supremely important things to say to you.

DICK. I'll give you two minutes.

BLAGDEN. Well, lemme come in. (*He comes in. DICK closes door and follows him in.*) [*Very drunk.*] (*Goes behind settee to R.*) 'Bandon hope all ye who enter here. 'Bandon hats—all ye who enter here. (*Takes off his opera hat.*) Beastly shame to 'bandon nice hat like that! (*He crushes it against himself.*) That's the hat trick. Oh, drefful hiccups. (*Comes round to c.*)

DICK (*sternly*). (*Coming down to L.C.*) What have you come for, Blagden. What do you want?

BLAGDEN (*jovially*). I want "a jug of wine and thou beside me in the wilderness."

DICK. I'm not going to give you any more liquor. You've had enough.

BLAGDEN. No, not nearly enough, b'lieve me. I am occupied in drowning dull care. Between ourselves, I have very nearly succeeded.

DICK. You swore to me in this very room that you'd leave whisky alone.

BLAGDEN. So I have, dear 'ole chap. I've been drinking gin.

DICK. You've broken your word.

BLAGDEN. Prepared t' break anything, dear old chap. If you want anything smashed jus' you give it to me. (*Puts his hat down on settee.*)

DICK (*coldly*). I think you'd better go.

BLAGDEN. But I've only jus' come, old chap. Would you like me to read you a sonnet? Jus' written it. Beau-ful thing. "Hail to thee, bright spirit!" No, that's Wordsworth. Words not worth a damn! (*Laughing feebly.*) I say—that's a joke! P'r'haps you don't think it's much of a joke. If you were as drunk as I am, you'd see how 'scrutiatingly hum'rous it really is.

DICK (*going to him*). Come along—I'll get you a cab! (*Takes his arm.*)

BLAGDEN (*breaking away from him*). No, I prefer nice smelly omnibus. Omlibus with a nice smelly smell. And I want to see your sister.

DICK. My sister isn't here. (*Moves to L. a little.*)

BLAGDEN. Nonsense! Abs'lute nonsense! She's the sole objec' of my visit.

DICK (*angrily*). I tell you she isn't here. And I'm busy—I'm engaged.

BLAGDEN. That's jus' what I want to be. (*Grows serious.*) Want to be engaged to your sister. (*Bell rings.*) There she is. Let's go and open the door.

DICK. Stay where you are. (*DICK goes up stage to open the door.*)

BLAGDEN. Most uncivil person. People are most beastly rude to me t'night. (*Crosses to R.*) S'pose it's the weather. Come in, I'il woman. (*Sits at table down R.*)

(*DICK opens door, disclosing STUART.*)

STUART. May I come in?

DICK. No, you may not.

STUART. You'd better let me. I've got something to tell you. (*Impatiently.*) Let me in, man, let me in! (*DICK hesitates.* BLAGDEN *lifts up the telephone and holds it to his ear.* Enter STUART. *He comes down and sees BLAGDEN.*) Who's that?

DICK (*closing door and standing R. of it.*) Blagden, He's tight.

BLAGDEN. Hullo! What are you doing here?

STUART (*shortly*). What's that got to do with you?

BLAGDEN (*thickly*). If I wasn't so beastly drunk I'd show you.

STUART (*goes up to DICK*). It's impossible to say anything before him. Can't we chuck him out?

BLAGDEN. Look here! You mind my own business, you l'il barrister pup! If you don't keep a civil tongue in my head, I'll make your name stink worse'n it does already. Going t'get even with you. P'r'aps you don't know I'm the editor of sev'ral Lunnon daily papers.

STUART (*coming down L. again*). He's blind to the world.

BLAGDEN. Oh, no, he isn't! Extremely gifted man.

DICK (*up L.C. to STUART*). HE won't go while you're here.

STUART. I tell you I MUST speak to you! It's imperative.

BLAGDEN (*to DICK*). That's the fellow who's after your sister. Think I'm going to leave *him* here? Where is the blush—blushin' Rose?

DICK (*angrily*). I tell you she's not here.

BLAGDEN. Nonsense! (*Rises unsteadily.*) If you don't go and fetch her, I shall go myself. (*Takes a step up R.*)

DICK (*quickly going behind settee to above BLAGDEN*). If you move, I'll . . .

BLAGDEN. Thought you said she wasn't here?

(STUART moves to L. end of settee.)

DICK. She's not here!

BLAGDEN. Oh! (*He sees MARJORIE's cloak.*) Whose cloak is that?

DICK (*shortly*). That's my business.

BLAGDEN. Yes, I know, ole chap. But whose cloak is it?

DICK (*angrily*). It's not my sister's cloak.

BLAGDEN (*stupidly*). Oh! Then whose sister's cloak is it? It isn't *my* sister's cloak because I haven't got a sister. That's abs'lute logic, isn't it? I say—is it *his* sister's cloak? (*A pause. STUART looks quickly at DICK.*)

Have you got her here all 'lone by yourself in the m'il of the night? (*Makes a grab at MARJORIE'S cloak, but DICK seizes it first.*) I'm going t'see. (*He makes a movement to the door L.*)

DICK (*throwing the cloak on to chair R. of window and crossing L. at back*). Stop him, Capel!

(*STUART steps forward and throws BLAGDEN back on the settee. DICK stands in front of the door down L.*)

STUART. Stay there! (*Steps back.*)

BLAGDEN (*slowly and intently*). All right. You've 'sulted me again. If your sister is in this house, I'll make her wish she'd never been born. 'N you too. 'Cos my influence with the presh. S'now you know. (*A pause.*)

STUART (*steps to DICK*). Is my sister here?

DICK (*coldly*). My guests are no concern of yours.

STUART. Perhaps you'll be good enough to answer my question.

DICK (*scornfully*). Perhaps you'll be good enough to mind your own business. Do you really think I am to be intimidated by you? I'm proof against bluster.

STUART. So you may be, but I intend to know who's in that room.

DICK. Oh! How do you propose to find out?

BLAGDEN. Most int'resting evening.

STUART (*to DICK*). I propose to find out, because I begin to see your game.

DICK. Do you? I'll bet you don't. D'you think the whole world's like you?

STUART (*with suppressed anger*). Are you going to tell me who's behind that door?

DICK. No, I'm not. It's no concern of yours.

STUART. I'm not so sure of that.

BLAGDEN (*wildly. Picks up cushion*). Bounce him, Capel! bounce him! Smash his bally head off! (*Swings cushion to L. end of settee.*)

STUART. I recognise that cloak.

DICK. I don't care a curse if you do.

BLAGDEN (*shouts*). Smash the bally door down!

DICK (*angrily to BLAGDEN*). Stop that shouting! Do you want the whole neighbourhood to know you're drunk?

BLAGDEN. I don't care *who* knows, ole chap. What's it matter to me?

STUART (*to DICK*). If my sister's here with you, you're a bigger cad than I took you for—and, by God! I believe she is here! For the last time now, stand away from that door.

(*He grapples with DICK, and they struggle moving to c.*)

BLAGDEN *mutters to himself, picks up cushion and stands on settee waving it.* DICK *flings STUART on to settee and stands R.C.*)

(*In the middle of the row the door opens and MARJORIE appears. They fall back. There is a pause. STUART leans forward.*)

STUART. My God!

BLAGDEN (*standing*). Lady Teazle—by all that's wonderful!

MARJ. What's all this about? (BLAGDEN *collapses on to settee.*)

STUART (*fiercely*). Then I was right! I was right! (*Turns to DICK.*) So *this* is how you get back on me.

BLAGDEN. Quite right too! An Englishman's house is his castle—Kenilworth Castle, Windsor Castle——

STUART (*angrily*). Keep that drunken devil quiet!

BLAGDEN. Three Castles! (*He begins to count castles on his fingers.*)

STUART (*fiercely*). We have an account to settle, you and I, Mr. Blair. Perhaps you'll tell this *friend* of yours to take himself off. (*Goes up to L. of chair behind settee.*)

BLAGDEN (*rises drunkenly*). Yes, this is no place for me—in my wrong surroundings. (*DICK moves to fireplace.*) (*To MARJORIE.*) Oh, you drefful young woman! (*Takes up his hat.*) Oh, you—drefful old hat! (*Puts it on and goes to door.*) Oh, you suffragette! You Pharaoh's daughter! (*To DICK.*) An' you're a most drefful young man! 'Stonished at you! Simply 'stonished! Wicked, drefful people! 'Stonished! Simply 'stonished! Pros'perous, simply pros'perous! [*Exit BLAGDEN.*]

(*Door bangs. DICK faces STUART.*)

DICK (*comes to R.C.*) Now settle your account.

STUART (*looks at him indignantly, holding himself in*

with dignity. Comes down to c.) You blackguard! (To DICK.) Who knows my sister's here? Who knows? Answer me—one of you.

DICK (to MARJORIE). Tell him. (*Sits at table down R.*)

MARJ. (*coming to L.C.*) Well, let me see—who *does* know? Quite a lot of people—the Macnaughtens on the floor below—I talked to them as I came up—so *they* know. Charlie Macnaughten's got a very talkative wife—she hates *me*. And then the Alexanders know—they saw me getting out of the car. Then Mr. Blair's maid knows—and of course she'll tell her friends. Then Mr. Blagden knows, and——

STUART. Have you gone clean off your head? What in the name of Hades do you think you've been doing?

MARJ. I've been calling on Mr. Blair.

STUART (*hotly*). Have you? (*Moves over to DICK.*) Then I demand an explanation—from Mr. Blair.

DICK (*still seated*). Ah! A few hours ago *I* demanded one from *you*.

STUART (*roughly*). And you got one.

DICK. Yes. And now *you're* getting one. (*A pause.*)

STUART. So you've taken a leaf out of *my* book, have you? You've taken a lesson from *me*.

DICK (*cheerfully*). Yes. One way and another I've learned a good many things from you. I've learnt what a hopeless fool a man can look without being in the least aware of it. I've learnt, in the last few minutes, that as a judge of character you're very nearly profound.

MARJ. (*to STUART*). What does all this righteous indignation mean? It seems to me a shade inconsistent.

STUART (*quietly*). Does it? Well, it means this. (*To DICK.*) I came here to-night to play the game by your sister—and I find you're not playing the game by mine. You're doing a low-down thing—deliberately! Well, I may be a waster, but at least I didn't do that! Whatever I may have done was justified, more or less, by—by affection. And that's about all there is to it. I'm here now to ask your sister to marry me—(*DICK rises, surprised and pleased*)—if she will, out of hand. And I'll clean chimneys or windows or boots, or some damned thing, for a living.

DICK (*to STUART*). You came here for that? (*STUART*

looks at him steadily.) Shake hands. (*Holds out his hand.*)

STUART (*with dignity*). No. I'll do myself the pleasure of refusing.

DICK (*still holding out his hand*). Why not do me the pleasure of accepting?

STUART. Because when the place is clear of women and drunkards I'm going to do my damndest to kick you round your flat.

DICK. Oh! (*Crosses to MARJORIE.*) Now perhaps you will go. (*Stands slightly above her.*)

STUART. If you care tuppence about your name at all.

MARJ. But I don't. I'm going to change it. (*Places her right arm in his left.*)

DICK. She's decided to try mine—in the morning.

STUART (*pauses*). Have you—(*They both laugh at him.*) Have you two blighters been pulling my leg?

DICK. No; but you haven't quite got the knack yet of seeing what's going on in the region of your nose.

STUART (*helplessly*). Well, bless you, my children. That's all I've got to say. Bless you, my . . . (*He holds out his hand to DICK.*) She's a simple sort of child, isn't she? (*Indicating MARJORIE.*)

MARJ. (*to STUART.*) I'm a woman. I told you so this morning, you dear old thing.

DICK. You're a Machiavelli. (*He passes her over and she sits R. end of settee.*) (*Bell rings, DICK goes to above L. end of settee.*) Hullo! Here's somebody else come now. I wonder who it is. (*STUART goes R.*)

MARJ. Oh, I think I can tell you who *this* is.

STUART. (*R.*) Who?

MARJ. Ah, be patient, my dear; keep calm. Never get excited.

DICK. I wonder what mischief you're up to now!

MARJ. Do you? Well, you'll see.

Enter AGNES.

AGNES. Sir John Capel!

Enter SIR JOHN, he comes down L.

STUART (*amazed*). What on earth's the meaning of this?

SIR J. You may well ask that, sir. I am here to ask the same question of Mr. Blair. Why is my daughter in your house unknown to me—at night?

DICK. Well, to tell you the truth, Sir John, it isn't altogether easy to explain.

MARJ. Oh, yes, it is, it's quite easy. I came here to propose to Mr. Blair.

STUART (*down R.*). That's pretty useful.

DICK (*to MARJORIE*). Here—steady——

MARJ. Well, it's true.

SIR J. Then this *letter* you left for me was *also* true?

MARJ. I didn't intend it as a joke.

SIR J. Are you in your senses? Am I awake?

DICK. Perhaps I can explain, Sir John. Your daughter came here to-night hoping that by doing so she might be able to force your hand—by placing herself in a difficult position.

SIR J. And are you willing to profit by that? Are you willing to profit by a young girl's chivalry?

DICK. No, Sir John, I am not. Have I ever said so?

SIR J. You threatened it, this morning.

DICK. Excuse me, I suggested it, as a hypothetical case. As a matter of fact I have proposed to your daughter with my every homage and respect. I might add that your daughter has accepted me. (*Goes at back to R. of settee, sits on edge, and leans over and takes MARJORIE'S hand.*)

MARJ. So it comes to much the same thing.

STUART. And in either case loud cheers. (*Sits on edge of table down R.*)

SIR J. You do not *know* my daughter, sir.

DICK. I know her well enough for that, Sir John.

STUART. Ah! you don't always see what's going on in the region of your nose, sir.

SIR J. (*taking a step to down L.*). What are you doing here?

STUART. Well, sir, my mission is constructive too.

SIR J. You have made your plans—in spite of me?

STUART. No, sir, but I'm here to make 'em, and they're on the complex—(*rises*)—side, and if you want your windows cleaned or your boots blacked I shall be delighted to secure your custom. I've suddenly grown up, sir, and that is about the most marked difference between us. I'm here to ask Miss Blair to be my wife.

SIR J. You defy me?

STUART. Well, sir, the little birdies *will* leave the nest.

SIR J. I do not understand this tomfoolery.

STUART. And if you take my tip, sir, you won't try. It's outside your range.

SIR J. Where *is* your sister, Mr. Blair? Let me see her.

STUART. Yes, where is your sister, Blair? (*Moves up between chair and table R.*)

DICK (*rises*). Good God! I was forgetting all about her.

STUART. What d'you mean? Don't you know where she is?

DICK. No.

STUART. Well, but—where do you think she is?

DICK. I'm wondering.

STUART. Wondering? D'you mean—you're anxious?

DICK. Aren't you? (*MARJORIE rises.*) She isn't here, and she ought to be. I haven't *seen* her for hours.

STUART. Well, but . . . where do you think she's gone?

DICK. How can I tell where she's gone? Where do hopeless women go sometimes?

STUART (*shocked*). Good God!

DICK (*bitterly*). Well, had *she* very much to hope for—this morning? Use your imagination. Has it struck you that you may have come too late? (*Suddenly.*) Wait! (*He rings the bell and goes behind the settee to door L.C.*). (*SIR JOHN sits down L., MARJORIE moves to R. of settee.*) It is just possible that someone knows. (*A pause. Enter AGNES.*) Agnes, have you any idea where Miss Rosie is?

AGNES. No, sir.

DICK. She didn't say where she was going?

AGNES. No, sir.

DICK. What time did she go out?

AGNES. Soon after lunch, sir.

DICK. Did she—seem at all unlike herself?

AGNES. I thought she was looking very pale, sir.

DICK. And—she didn't leave any message?

AGNES. No, sir.

DICK. All right, Agnes. You'd better go to bed; it's getting late.

AGNES. Is anything the matter, sir?

DICK. I—I don't know! (*Goes down to L.C.*) [*Exit AGNES.*] DICK *makes a despairing gesture. Goes up to behind settee.* You see——

(*MARJORIE goes slowly up to back.*)

SIR J. Let us hope you are putting too grave a construction on your sister's absence, Mr. Blair.

(*DICK becomes drawn and tense. He speaks brokenly and loses his control.*)

DICK. I hope I may be—but I've never known her to do such a thing as this before. It's utterly unlike her. And in these particular circumstances—can't you see? When one remembers—what was in her mind—when one remembers—what she had to face! I was obliged to be out all day myself. I couldn't stay with her here or look after her. So she . . . (*In a changed voice, deliberately, to STUART.*) If Rosie's dead, I'll kill you. You taught her to cheat and lie! You put deception into her. Till she met *you*, her soul was as white as snow. You've turned her life into a blistering horror! Damn you for what you've done! Damn you! (*DICK pulls himself together and continues brokenly. MARJORIE buries her face in her hands.*) She's the only thing I've ever had to love—or to love *me*. She's been with me ever since I can remember. All the time I was working, struggling to get on, we've been together. I've taught her, educated her myself. And now you've brought her to this! (*Breaking down.*) God! I can't bear it! I can't bear it! (*Sinks into chair behind settee, his back to audience. STUART, after a moment, takes up the telephone. Door slam—and is just going to speak when a door bangs. Starting.*) What's that! (*Enter ROSE. DICK goes to her in a passion of relief.*) Rosie! Rosie! (*ROSE throws herself into his arms and clings to him, half sobbing.*)

ROSE. Dick! Dick!

DICK (*clinging to her*). Rosie! where have you been, dear? Why do you torture me like this? Where have you been, dear? Tell me. (*STUART comes to R.C. ROSE is shaking with sobs. DICK soothes her.*) There, there; it's all right, sweetheart. It's all right, darling. Where have you been, dear? Tell me.

ROSE (*brokenly*). I went—I went to Richmond.

DICK. To Richmond? Why did you—go there?

ROSE. I went—to look—I wanted to be—alone.

(DICK gives a swift, confirmatory look at STUART.)

STUART (coming to c. Quietly.) Rosie, will you—will you marry me? Will you marry me on a couple of hundred a year? It's all the money I've got.

(ROSE looks at him incredulously. Then she looks at DICK.)

DICK. It's all right, Kiddie—it's all right. (L.)

(ROSE goes shyly to STUART.)

STUART (holds out his hands to her). Will you, Rosie?

ROSE. Yes.

STUART. That's right. (SIR JOHN rises.) Forgive your enemies. This is my father, Rosie.

(DICK closes door, which ROSE has left open.)

SIR J. (crosses to ROSE). So you're going to marry my son?

STUART. Yes, sir, but don't *you* come butting in. (MARJORIE joins DICK, and they come down L.C.) I've told Miss Blair myself she's quite mad to take on with me as it is.

SIR J. Then for once in my life I agree with you. (To DICK.) And you've carried off my daughter without my consent.

DICK (L. of SIR JOHN). Well, by the modern standard, Sir John, it seemed more important to obtain hers.

SIR J. Then perhaps you'll be good enough to see my daughter home—if that is included in the modern method too.

DICK. It is, Sir John, quite. And I shall probably kiss her in the cab—in the old-fashioned method.

SIR J. Miss Blair, they tell me my son is a cubist cub, or nut—whatever that may mean. However, if you can induce him to work, I suppose I must open an account for you at Coutts' Bank. Your brother informs me it's the proper thing.

STUART. Well, upon my soul, sir, you're the most extraordinary man. I shall live to be proud of you yet.

SIR J. Tcha!

CURTAIN.

(As curtain falls, DICK takes SIR JOHN up L.C., saying)

DICK. Let me see you out, Sir John.

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A Pretty Bequest	3 M. 2 F.	Malcolm Watson ..	1 0
A Strange Host	3 M. 2 F.	Arthur Law ..	1 0
A Terrible Fright	2 M. 2 F.	Arthur Law ..	1 0
A United Pair	3 M. 2 F.	Comyns Carr ..	1 0
A Woman's Way	3 M. 2 F.	Edith Wheeler ..	0 6
Afterwards	3 F.	Marion Robertson ..	0 6
Augustus in search of a Father	3 M. ..	Harold Chapin ..	0 6
All at Sea	3 M. 2 F.	Arthur Law ..	1 0
An Academy Picture	3 M. 2 F.	Ethel Chillingworth ..	0 6
An Artful Automaton	2 M. 2 F.	Arthur Law ..	1 0
An Unrehearsed Comedy (Duologue)	1 M. 1 F.	M. F. Hutchinson ..	0 6
At the Play	1 M. 1 F.	Edward E. Piaggio ..	0 6
Before the Dawn	3 M. 2 F.	Henry Byatt ..	1 0
Bet, The (Comedy)	5 M. 2 F.	Darcy Levenson ..	1 0
Better Half The, (Humorous Duologue)	1 M. 1 F.	Frank Runchman ..	0 6
†Call of Duty, The	1 M. 1 F.	Chas. Beatty.	MS.
Castle Botherem	3 M. 3 F.	Arthur Law ..	1 0
Cherry Tree Farm.. .. .	3 M. 2 F.	Arthur Law ..	1 0
Cressmans Entertain, The	5 M. 7 F.	M. F. Hutchinson ..	1 0
*Doings of Jane, The	2 F.	M. F. Hutchinson ..	0 6
Doily's Week-end; or, The Tale of a Speaking-tube (Comedy)	4 M. 4 F.	Florence Warden ..	0 6
Doorway, The	2 M. 1 F.	Harold Brighthouse ..	0 6
Enchantment (a Fairy Tale)	3 M. 2 F.	Arthur Law ..	1 0
Feminine Strategy	1 M. 1 F.	Catherine Adams ..	0 6
Lazineia, or, The Enchanted Princess (a Fairy Extravaganza. Three Scenes)	2 M. 2 F.	E. L. Blanchard ..	0 4
Little Stone House, The	4 M. 2 F.	George Calderon ..	0 6
Magic in the Garden	2 M. 3 F.	M. F. Hutchinson ..	0 6
Makeshifts	2 M. 2 F.	Gertrude Robins ..	1 0
Misfits and Muddlewits (Humorous Duologue)	1 M. 1 F.	Edith Wheeler ..	0 6
Mrs. Hazenby's Health	1 M. 3 F.	Curtis Brown ..	0 6
Mushroom Prince, The (for Children)	1 M. 3 F.	B. Rideaux & M. Derwent	0 4
Naturalist, The (a Comedy)	3 M. 2 F.	Comyns Carr ..	1 0

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ONE ACT PLAYS (with

Nobody's Fault	3 M. 2. F.	Arthur Law	s. d. 1 0
Necklace (a Charade. Three Scenes)	3 M. 3 F.	Mrs. H. Mackarness	0 4
Old Knockles.. .. .	3 M. 2 F.	Arthur Law	1 0
One Hundred Pounds Reward	3 M. 2 F.	Arthur Law	1 0
One Too Many (a Comedietta)	4 M. 2 F.	F. C. Burnand	1 0
Realities	2 M. 2 F.	Gertrude Robins	1 0
Red Riding Hood (a Rhymed Play)	3 M. 1 F.	William Yardley	0 4
Sentence, The	2 M. 1 F.	Edith Wheeler	0 6
Spring in Bloomsbury	3 M. 1 F.	Harold Brighthouse	0 6
Susannah	1 M. 2 F.	M. F. Hutchinson	0 6
Three Tenants (a Comedy)	3 M. 2 F.	Gilbert A'Beckett	1 0
Treasure Trove	3 M. 2 F.	Arthur Law	1 0
Two Men and a Maid	2 M. 1 F.	W. L. Wade-Dalton	0 6
Verger, The	3 M. 2 F.	Walter Frith	1 0
Wanted: a Housekeeper	1 M. 3 F.	Clement O'Neill	0 6

TWO ACT PLAYS (without Vocal Numbers).

Efficiency of Man, The (in Three Scenes)	8 M. ..	M. F. Hutchinson	1 0
Head of the Poll	3 M. 2 F.	Arthur Law	1 0
Lady Barbara's Birthday (Comedietta)	3 M. 4 F.	A. E. Barker	0 4
*When Woman Rules (Comedy for Girls)	14 F.	M. F. Hutchinson	1 0

THREE ACT PLAYS (without Vocal Numbers).

Art and Opportunity (Comedy) (4 M. 2 F.)	(on loan)	Harold Chapin	MS.
At the Barn	(stiff boards) 7 M. 5 F.	Anthony P. Wharton	2 6
† Better Not Enquire (Comedy)	7 M. 7 F. and supers.	Alfred Capus	MS.
Dicky's Luck (Comedy)	7 M. 6 F.	(adapted by Gladys Unger) Robert & Julian Hay	1 6
*Man Next Door, The (Comedy in Three Scenes)	4 F.	M. F. Hutchinson	1 0
Rutherford & Son	(stiff boards) 4 M. 4 F.	Githa Sowerby	2 6
The Fountain.. .. .	7 M. 4 F.	Geo. Calderon	0 6
The Probationer (4 acts)	6 M. 4 F.	Anthony Rowley	0 6
The Weaver's Shuttle	6 M. 4 F.	Anthony Rowley	0 6
David Ballard	6 M. 4 F.	Chas. McEvoy	1 0
A Place in the Sun	5 M. 4 F.	Cyril Harcourt	2 6
Jane Clegg	(on loan)	St. John Ervine	MS.
Barbara Grows Up	(on loan) 3 M. 4 F.	Geo. J. Hamlen	MS.

Plays marked with an asterisk * thus, are for female characters only.

† MS. on hire.

M—Male.

F—Female.

N.B.—All particulars, including Synopsis, Length of Performance, Compass of Vocal Numbers, Author's Fees, etc., will be found in "THUMB-NAIL PLOTS," a descriptive guide of 200 pages, post free, 6d.

